A

Syſtem of Divinity,

in

A COURSE of SERMONS,

on the

FIRST INSTITUTIONS of RELIGION;

On the BEING and ATTRIBUTES of GOD;

on ſome of the moſt important

ARTICLES of the CHRISTIAN-RELIGION,

in Connection;

And

On the ſeveral Virtues and Vices of Mankind:

with Occaſional Diſcourſes.

Being a Compilation from the beſt Sentiments of the polite Writers, and eminent, ſound Divines, both ancient and modern, on the ſame Subjects, properly connected, with Improvements, particularly adapted for the Uſe of chief FAMILIES and STUDENTS in DIVINITY, and for CHURCHES, for the Benefit of Mankind in general.

Volume XIX.

By the Rev'd Wm. DAVY. A. B.

LUSTLEIGH, DEVON.

Printed by Himſelf. —— Fourteen Copies only.

MDCCCIII.

A

System of Divinity,

in

A COURSE of SERMONS,

on the

FIRST INSTITUTIONS of RELIGION;

On the Being and Attributes of GOD;

on Hope of the soul Immortal,

And the Duties of the Christian-Religion,

On the Eternal Ver[illegible] Rule of Mankind;

with Occasional Discourses.

Volume XIX.

By the Revd. Wm. Dave, A. B.

Exeter, Devon.

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SERMONS

on Social and Religious Duties.

"[illegible]"

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CONTENTS

of the

Nineteenth Volume.

SERMON CCCLXIII.

Marriage, a Duty we owe to Society, &c. &c.

Heb. xiii. 4. "Marriage is honourable in all." Page — 1

SERMON CCCLXIV. CCCLXV.

On the same Subject. —— —— 34, 57

SERMON CCCLXX. (*)

Duty of Husbands.

Colos. iii. 19. "Husbands, love your Wives, and be not bitter against them." —— —— 77

SERMON CCCLXXI.

On the same Subject. —— —— 96

SERMON CCCLXXII.

Duty of Wives.

Eph. v. 33. "And the Wife see that she reverence her Husband." —— —— 117

SERMON CCCLXXIII.

On the same Subject. —— —— 141

(*) See this Number accounted for, in the Volume.

CONTENTS.

SERMON CCCLXXIV.

The Duty of Parents.

Ephe. vi. 4. "Fathers, provoke not your Children to Wrath; but bring them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord." Page 164

SERMON CCCLXXX.

On the same Subject.

Page 215, 234, 255, 269.

SERMON CCCLXXX.

Duties of Children to their Parents.

Ephe. vi. 1, 2, 3. "Children, obey your Parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honour thy Father and Mother, (which is the first Commandment with Promise) that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the Earth." 282

SERMON 281, 282, 283, 284.

On the same Subject.

Page 310, 332, 357, 378.

SERMON CCCLXIII. (*)

Marriage, a Duty we owe to Society, with Particulars relating to it.

Heb. xiii. 4. "Marriage is honourable in all."

In the Beginning, God saw "it was not good for Man to be alone;" — Man was THEN in his perfect State, as he was created in the Image of his Maker; there was no Bias upon his Will, nor Disorder in his Affections; every thing he was connected with, had (by Virtue of the divine Blessing annexed to his Obedience) an immediate Tendency to promote his Happiness; and the Beauty, Use, and Comfort, he found in the Creatures, were so many Steps by which he advanced in Knowledge, Love and Enjoyment of his great Creator.

The Moment he fell, this happy Order was interrupted, and a far different Scene took place.

Man himself, and all the Creation around him, for his

(*) Two Sermons being added since the last, One in the Ninth Volume, and the Other in the Fifteenth, are here allowed for.

his Sake, became ſubject to Vanity. His Creature-comforts no longer remained in Subordination to his real Good, but uſurping the ſupreme Place in his Affections, became Snares to entangle him in the Path of his Duty; and Screens to intercept the divine Preſence and Favour from him.

Thus in Adam we loſt all, and every Attempt in our Natural State to obtain Peace and Satisfaction in a World upon which our Sins have entailed a Curſe, is but renewing the raſh and unſucceſsful Deſign of the Builders of Babel. However great our Diligence, or however promiſing our Proſpects, God, from on high, beholds and mocks our empty Toil, he breaks our well-contrived Bubbels, and leaves us under the perpetual Shame and Reproach of having begun that which we are utterly unable to finiſh.

Theſe are mournful Truths, confirmed by the repeated Diſappointments of every Day; however, we are not left to ſink under their Weight. The Goſpel teaches us, that through our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, all his faithful Followers have a renewed Title to the good things of both Worlds; every Creature of God is again ſanctified to our Uſe, and all things made clean to us. Yet ſo, – that though the Curſe is wholly taken off the Way, in ſome Meaſure, ſtill remains. – This is a wiſe Appointment, equally neceſſary to exerciſe

and

and ſtrengthen our Faith, and to quicken our Deſires after a better and more enduring Inheritance.

This Vanity which is ſo apparent in the painful Purſuit, and the uncertain, unſatisfying Poſſeſſion of all temporal Goods might be more eaſily born, were our Judgment of them according to Truth, and if we knew how to value them in Proportion to their real Importance, and their Subſerviency to our beſt Intereſt. – But alas! Sin blinds our Eyes, inflames our Paſſions, and, like a poiſoned Arrow, too often, renders thoſe Wounds incurable and fatal, which would otherwiſe have been only painful. In vain do we reſolve againſt the Breach of any poſitive divine Precept, while an undue Sollicitude and Affection for "things lawful in themſelves, and only evil to us in their Abuſe," are no leſs contrary to our Chriſtian Profeſſion, no leſs deſtructive to our true Peace, than a Courſe of outward Wickedneſs. For, as "the firſt and greateſt of the Commandments is to love the Lord our God, with all our Minds, with all our Souls, and with all our Strength" – ſo undoubtedly the firſt and greateſt of Sins, is to ſet up Idols in our Hearts againſt him, and to love, truſt and rejoice in any inferior Object, while we live inſenſible of our Obligations to the Author of our Beings, the Fountain of Happineſs, who formed us for himſelf, and has therefore endowed us with Ca-

 pacities

pacities and Defires which nothing ſhort of himſelf can ſatisfy.

From hence it appears, that there is not the leaſt Repugnancy between the Declaration of God, (*) and the Judgment of the Apoſtle. (†)

The One was ſpoken of Man, when his moſt common Bleſſings inſpired him with Gratitude; the Other of Man in his preſent State, ſo fatally perverted, that his moſt peculiar and endearing Poſſeſſions prove the Occaſion of alienating his Heart from their gracious Donor. — Yet,

Since Marriage was not deſigned for the State of Innocence only – ſince it was inſtituted by God himſelf, and honoured by the immediate Preſence of his Son, our Bleſſed Lord and Saviour – ſince it was the appointed Way by divine Providence ſucceſſively to keep up the Human Race – ſince it is a State eminently liable to the dangerous Snare already mentioned, and, when theſe are happily obviated, is productive of the moſt generous and heart-felt Pleaſures, we are capable of as ſocial Creatures: It is a Point of no ſmall Weight, duly to eſtabliſh the Lawfulneſs and Expediency of it, and to conſider how this important Engagement may be entered upon, and conducted, ſo as moſt to promote our preſent Satisfaction, and future Peace and Welfare.

When

(*) Gen. ii. 18. (†) 1 Cor. vii. 1.

When Man arrives to a certain Age, he becomes ſenſible of a peculiar Sympathy and Tenderneſs towards the other Sex; the Charms of Beauty engage his Attention, and call forth new and ſofter Diſpoſitions than he before felt. The many amiable Qualities exhibited by a fair Outſide, or by the mild Alluſement of Female Manners, or which the prejudiced Spectator, without much Reaſoning, ſuppoſes thoſe to include, with ſeveral other Circumſtances, both natural and acquired, (*) point his View and Affection to a particular Object, and, of Courſe, contract that general Regard, which was loſt and uſeleſs among the undiſtinguiſhed Crowd, into a peculiar and permanent Attachment to one Woman, which ordinarily terminates in the moſt important, venerable, and delightful Connection in Life. (‡) The

(*) *Quis non leviter Turbâ quod accrevit in illâ?*

(‡) That God has implanted in every Breaſt a Principle of Love and Benevolence, is an indiſputable Truth, which calls for the higheſt Senſe of Gratitude to our Creator; and leſt that Principle ſhould, like a Drop of Rain falling into the Ocean, loſe itſelf in a Multiplicity of Objects, God has thought fit to direct it, as it were, into proper Channels, to confine it by inſeparable Connections, by the Ties of Kindred, and the Bonds of Natural Affection.

From this Fountain flow all thoſe domeſtic Sweets, which alleviate the Cares and enhance the Bleſſings of Life, thoſe ſocial Duties, and tender Relations, which act a double Part; and whilſt they make us

The State of the Brute-Creation is very different from that of the Human Species. The former are cloathed and generally armed by their Structure, eaſily find what is neceſſary to their Subſiſtence, and ſoon attain their full Strength and Maturity: ſo that they need the Care and Aid of their Parents but for a ſhort While; and therefore, we ſee that Nature has aſſigned to them vagrant and tranſient Amours. The Connection being purely natural, and formed meerly for the Increaſe and rearing their Offspring, no ſooner is That End anſwered, than the Connection diſſolves of Courſe. But, the human Race are of a more tender and defenceleſs Conſtitution; their Infancy and Non-age continue longer; they advance ſlowly to Strength of Body and Maturity of Reaſon; they need conſtant Attention and a long Series of Cares and Labours to train them up to Decency, Virtue, and the various Arts of Life. (*) Na-

happy here in the Diſcharge of them, recommend us at the ſame Time to the Almighty, and ſecure our future and everlaſting Happineſs. — Love is a Paſſion ſo neceſſary, that without it the human Race would ſoon expire. Both Sexes are improved and refined by their lawful Inclination to each other; an Inclination which ſometimes produces the warmeſt Friendſhip and the tendereſt Sympathy: but it produces theſe Effects only when it is under the Diſcipline of Religion or Reaſon; for when left to its own unguided Impetuoſity, it is frequently the Cauſe of Adultery, Treachery, Inceſt, and Murder.

(*) See this Caſe ſpoken-to, in Vol. xvii. Page 27, 28.

Nature has, therefore, provided them with the moſt affectionate and anxious Tutors, to aid their Weakneſs, to ſupply their Wants, and to accompliſh them in neceſſary Arts, even their own Parents, on whom ſhe has devolved this great Charge, rendered agreeable by the moſt alluring and powerful of all Ties, PARENTAL ATTRACTION. But, unleſs Both concur in this grateful Talk, and continue their joint Labours, till they have reared up, and planted out their young Colony, they muſt become a Prey to every rude Invader, and the Purpoſe of Nature in the original Union of the human Pair be defeated. Therefore our Structure, as well as Condition, is an evident Indication, that the human Sexes are deſtined for a more intimate, and moral laſting Union! The principal End of Marriage being not ſo much to raiſe up an Offspring, as to educate and form them for the great Duties and exclusive Deſtinations of Life. Society muſt be ſupplied from this original Nurſery with uſeful Members, and its faireſt Ornament and Supports. But, how ſhall the young Plants be guarded againſt the Inclemencies of the Air and Seaſons, cultivated and raiſed to Maturity, if Men like Brutes, indulge to vagrant and promiſcuous Connections?

The Mind is apt to be diſſipated in its Views, and Acts of Friendſhip and Humanity, unleſs the former

be directed to a particular Province. When Men once indulge to this Diſſipation, there is no ſtopping their Courſe, they grow inſenſible to moral Attractions, and by obſtructing, or impairing the decent and regular Exerciſe of the tender and generous Feelings of the human Heart, they, in Time, become unqualified for, or averſe to, the forming a moral Union of Souls, which is the Cement of Society, and the Source of the pureſt domeſtick Joys.

If the Appetite of Concupiſcence were to be left at large, many Inconveniencies and Miſchiefs muſt follow, the Alliances of Families, and the Ties of Blood and Kindred muſt ceaſe; Inheritance and Property would be confounded, the Endearments that are peculiar to conjugal Affection, and the mutual Fidelity between Husband and Wife, eſtabliſhed on ſolemn Stipulations, and ſecured by one common Intereſt, would be greatly miſſed in ſocial Life; the Education of Children muſt be neglected, and the Comfort of them could ſubſiſt but for a little While; for, as Children would be at a Loſs to know their own Fathers, ſo Fathers would be ignorant of their own Children, and both Male and Female thus continually changing their Attachments, all parental and filial Affections, of Courſe, would be at an End in ſhort.

The Race of Mankind would be ſo diſunited and blended,

blended, that the World must soon run into infinite Confusions and Disorders. Whereas, a rational, undepraved Love, and its fair Companion, MARRIAGE, collect a Man's Views, guide his Heart to its proper Object, and by confining his Affection to THAT Object, do really enlarge its Influence and Use.(*) — For these Reasons God hath wisely laid This Appetite of Mankind under strict Restraints, and "ordained the holy State of Matrimony," that One Man and one Woman, "forsaking all others," should live together in inviolable Union, and that the human Race should be perpetuated this Way, and under this Limitation only, and that all other Offspring should be spurious and dishonourable. (†) — Besides, It

(*) —— *Quod nunc Ratio est, Impetus antè fuit.*
'Tis Reason now, 'twas Appetite before.

(†) To what is here said, respecting Reason and Command in this Case, Men of Liberty have nothing to oppose in earnest, but the Examples of some Men in Scripture, high in God's Favour; who yet had more Wives than one, or, at least, had many Concubines.

To this it may be answered, that Example is not the Rule of Life, but Precept. A great many good Men have done very ill things; and when the Scriptures recount their evil Actions, without Blame or Censure, they do not thereby justify & approve them. Unless we've a Rule in Scripture ascribing and forbidding such Actions, it is enough. However, some of these Liberties might be permitted in those Days and Places, for Reasons proper and peculiar to them, which would not be fit for others at other Times.

The Athenians, having been miserably wasted by a Plague, adopted this Measure (which, by their regular Constitution, was deemed impolitic) for the Purpose of repeopling their State. (Diog. Laer. Solon. Lib. ii. § 28.) And Julius Cæsar, for the like Purpose of increasing the Common-Wealth, had it once in Contemplation to introduce a Law allowing every Man to marry as many Wives as he chose. (Sueton. Jul. Cæs. cap. 52.) And it is easy to imagine, that in the early Ages of the World there might be Reasons of a similar Kind, in different Places, for this Practice, which, tho' they would not absolutely authorise it, yet might considerably lessen the Evil of it. The Practice having once obtained, the incorrupt Passions of Men would naturally precipitate them eagerly into it. And as the Patriarchs emigrated from among Idolaters and Polygamists, it is not to be wondered that they continued some of the evil Customs in which they had been educated. Much less is it to be wondered

be directed to a particular Province. When Men once indulge to this Diſſipation, there is no ſtopping their Courſe, they grow inſenſible to moral Attractions, and by obſtructing or impairing the decent and regular Exerciſe of the tender and generous Feelings of the human Heart, they, in Time, become unqualified for, or averſe to, the forming a moral Union of Souls, which is the Cement of Society, and the Source of the pureſt domeſtick Joys.

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(*) —— *Quod nunc Ratio est, Impetus antè fuit.*

after their Progenitors in this Particular. Such a Havock had Pharaoh made among their Male Children, that altho the Providence of God prevented his exterminating them, it is probable their Number, when they left Egypt, was considerably less than that of their Females. And this Circumstance might, in their Apprehension, render that highly expedient to which they felt themselves strongly prone. And the Effect of Example, Custom, and Fashion, is great. Add to this, that the Idea of the Messiah's originating among them, gave-rise to an ardent and universal Desire in the Heads of Families to be the Parents of a numerous Offspring, each hoping that this Illustrious Person might derive from his House. And a Desire that was considered as pious, would naturally enough forward a Practice to which Men felt themselves allured by Passion and Example.

But to obviate, &c. — (Page 10.)

It is but too evident from the Conduct of Mankind, that the common Ties of Humanity are too feeble to engage and intereſt the Paſſions of the Generality in the Affairs of Society.

The Connection of Neighbourhood, Acquaintance and general Intercourſe are too wide a Field of Action for many, and thoſe of a Public or Community are far more ſo, and in which they either care not, or know not, how to exert themſelves.

Nature, therefore, ever wiſe and benevolent, by implanting That ſtrong Sympathy which reigns between the Individuals of each Sex, and by urging them to form a particular moral Connection, the Spring of many domeſtic Endearments, (*) has meaſured out to each Pair

But to obviate all Objection: It is moſt reaſonable to look for the Inſtitution of it, which was in Paradiſe, where Adam had but one Eve; and in the Reſtoration of the World by Noah and his Sons after the Flood, where each of them had but one Wife: and yet, at theſe two Seaſons, there was the greateſt Occaſion for multiplying People to inhabit the World, that ever yet has been; and whatever Permiſſion, or Indulgence followed afterwards, it is certain that our Saviour Chriſt reduced it to its firſt Appointment and Inſtitution, and ſo the Chriſtian World has ever ſince maintained it.

(*) Good and bad Women either ſweeten or poiſon the Cup of Life, ſo great is their Power of doing much Good, or much Evil.

When Women know the Power of their Sex, and exercile it, the Conſequences have been very ſurpriſing: the Hero, the Magiſtrate, the

Past a particular Space of Action, proportioned to their

the Philosopher, and the Priest, think no more of their Grandeur, or their Power; all Restraint, all Reserve, are laid aside for a Time; all puerile Freedom of Speech succeeds to studied Harangues, and the most grave and solemn Looks, the Man of Business and Retirement, the Wordy and the Old drop their Characters before Women. The studious Man leaves his Closet, the Merchant his Negotiations, and sometimes the General quits the Field, and the Judge descends from the Bench to enjoy the Company of their favourite Females.

But further still, notwithstanding *they* take the Lead, and appear as public Characters, yet there is Reason to believe that all of them are in some Degree influenced by *Women* in what they do.

Daily Experience shews us, that the most rude Rustick grows humane, as soon as he is inspired by Love. It gives a new Grace to our Manners, a new Dignity to our Minds, and a new Visage to our Persons; for, as Love makes a Woman's Behaviour ridiculous, so it refines that of Man.

Whether we are inclined to Liberal Arts, to Arms, or Address in our Exercise, our Improvement is inflamed by a particular Object which we would please. Chearfulness, Gentleness, Fortitude, Liberality, Magnificence, and all the Virtues which adorn Man, which inspire Heroes, are most conspicuous in Lovers. If we strike Love out of the Soul, Life would be insipid, and our Being but half animated. Human Nature would sink into Deadness and Lethargy, if not quickened by some active Principle; as for all Others, whether Ambition, Envy, or Avarice, whatever agitates or pollutes the Mind in the Absence of this Passion, it must be allowed that they have greater Pains, without the Compensation of such exquisite Pleasures as we find in Love.

Since, therefore, Women have such Power, either directly or indirectly, it is of the greatest Importance that they should have a good

their Views, and adapted to their respective Capacities.

Besides, — By interesting them deeply in the Concerns of their own little Circle, she has connected them more closely with Society, which is composed of particular Families, and bound them down to their good Behaviour in That particular Community to which they belong. This moral Connexion is Marriage, and this Sphere of Action is a Family.

As to divine Authority in the Case, it appears from the Second Chapter of Genesis, that this was the first Law which God made for the Benefit of Mankind, and that in Order to give it a real Foundation in Nature, the first Wife was formed out of the very Substance of her Husband's Body. "She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man; therefore shall a Man leave his Father and his Mother, and shall cleave unto his Wife, and they two shall be one Flesh;" to be the Parents of the whole Race.

This single Fact, is it not a Kind of Precept? An Admonition to us, what is the most suitable to our Nature, in the Estimation of him that made us? — But, Whereever we find it the declared Will of our Creator that

Education, and all possible Means made use of to make them wise, and to keep them strictly virtuous. *Felices ter et amplius quos irrupta tenet Copula.* See Knox's Essays, No. 14. On the Necessity and Method of encouraging, in the Community, the Prevalence of virtuous Love.

that "a Man ſhall leave his Father and Mother, and cleave to his Wife" — we muſt own it to be clearly taught us; as our Lord himſelf, indeed, explains it, that this Society was originally meant to comprehend but two Perſons, and to be completed between them; and, that at the very firſt Marriage, Polygamy was forbidden. (*)

This Law was undoubtedly handed down by Tradition, and eſtabliſhed by conſtant Uſage among Adam's Deſcendents, who, after the Memory of the firſt Inſtitution was loſt, continued the Practice from the Experience of its Uſefulneſs. This plainly accounts for the univerſal Cuſtom of Marriage over the whole World, not excepting the moſt ignorant and ſavage Nations. But this Fence of Chaſtity was not long kept entire; for as the World fell into Corruption, and Men gave a Looſe to their wanton Appetites, great Breaches were made in it by Poligamy and Concubinage, by which Means one Man aſſumed to himſelf the Property of many Women, contrary to the Law of Equity, and to the plain Intention of Providence in ſupplying nearly an equal Number of each Sex, that Male and Female might be linked together by Pairs in Matrimony.

This unequal Diſtribution prevailed for many Ages, and produced infinite Jealouſies and Diſturb-

(*) Polygamy is not only inconſiſtent with our Form and the very Letter of the Marriage Contract, but with the *Eſſence* of marriage, which lies in ſuch a Union and Love as can only be between Two. Ariſtotle doth not allow there can be even perfect Friendſhip between more than two; much leſs, therefore, perfect Love.

Πολλοις οὐκι φιλον, κατα τον τελειον φιλιαν, ου δεχεται, δουναι δ' αμα πολλοις αμα; ου γαρ φιλ. αλλα αυτοι.

ances in Families, (*) but as the Fences were never quite plucked up, nor the Field laid open and common to promiſcuous Love, and there were always Claims of Property, and certain Reſtraints in Favour of Chaſtity and Fidelity, this is no ſmall Atteſtation to the Wiſdom and Purity of the Ordinance of holy Matrimony.

But when the Chriſtian Religion took place, it again made up the original Encloſure of Chaſtity, and laid a ſevere Reſtraint upon this licentious Appetite, by limiting one Woman to one Man, and forbidding all impure Commerce, under the higheſt Penalties.

From what hath been ſaid – it appears, that, to adult Perſons, who have Fortune ſufficient to provide for a Family, according to their Rank and Condition in Life, and who are endued with the ordinary Degrees of Prudence, neceſſary to manage a Family, and educate Children, it is a Duty they owe to Society, to marry. (‡) Some

(*) See Vol. xiv. Page 277.

(‡) See No. 518, of the Spectator.

We cannot help recommending here, an early Period of Life as the fitteſt for entering into this Relation. By early Life, we mean That Age when a Perſon, by the general Conſent of Mankind, is deemed *ſui Juris*, or at his own Diſpoſal.

Alliances formed previous to this, are often followed with very pernicious Conſequences, as they are, in ſome Inſtances, the Reſult of Others, rather than the Judgment and Attachment of the Parties themſelves; and as in too many others, they are Effects of a childiſh Paſſion, wholly unreſtrained by Proſpects and Conſideration. And on the contrary, Marriages contracted at a later Period often fall of

(under)

Some Pretenders to a peculiar Refinement in Morals

Love, in its Infancy, leſſens every Fault; in its Declenſion, it not only aggravates, but multiplies them. There is a vaſt Difference between the Diſguſts that an old Engagement gives us, and the pleaſing Inquietudes of a growing Paſſion.

Nulla fides manet, mobilis erroſ Amor,
Surgentes novo tollitur omnis Amor.

In a new Amour we paſs every Hour of the Day with freſh Satisfaction; it is an inexpreſſible Pleaſure to find that our Love grows upon us every Minute. But in a Paſſion of an old Standing, our Time is ſpent very uneaſily, in ſtill loving leſs and leſs, or not at all; for the Endeavours to revive a decaying Paſſion generally extinguiſhes the Remains of it. — *Languida ſordet Amor. Cum Formâ deſinit Amor.* — See No. 89, with the firſt Part of No. 281, of the Spectator.

The principal Inconveniencies of early Marriages are, that ſometime, they have more Children than can be well ſupported, or elſe that the Son wiſhes to be Maſter too ſoon, or the Daughter begins to bloom before the Mother is content to fade; but thoſe who marry late in Life labour under many more Diſadvantages, not only becauſe they are paſt their Prime, and their Prejudices and bad Habits are not likely to be removed by each other's Advice, but if they ſhould have any Children, they will be likely to leave them to the wide World, or to a Guardian's Mercy; and if they ſhould not die when their Children are very young, yet ſtill they will either leave the World before their Children are old enough to become wiſe of great, or elſe the Parents will be ſo feeble by Age and Infirmities, as not to enjoy the Honour and Comforts that their Children might procure them. — Thus we ſee that altho' they have leſs to fear than thoſe who marry in Youth, yet they have leſs to hope; and beſides miſſing the Joys of early Love, and the Pleaſure of uniting with pliant Manners, they are likely to have leſs Comforts, and more Inconveniencies, than thoſe who marry when young. Serm. 163

ances in Families, (a) but as the Fences were never quite plucked up, nor the Field laid open and common to promiſcuous Love, and there were always Claims of Property, and certain Reſtraints in Favour of Chaſtity and Fidelity, this is no ſmall Atteſtation to the Wiſdom and Purity of the Ordinance of holy Matrimony.

But when the Chriſtian Religion took-place, it again made up the original Encloſure of Chaſtity, and laid a ſevere Reſtraint upon this licentious Appetite, by limiting one Woman to one Man, and forbidding all impure Commerce, under the higheſt Penalties.

From what hath been ſaid – it appears, that, to attaining the Happineſs propoſed; as the Heart is *then* leſs ſuſceptible of the Warmth of generous Love than in Youth, the Mind is occupied with increaſing Wealth, and Habits are formed which will not eaſily yield to Controul.

The Marriage Connection therefore, agreeable to the plain Dictate of Nature, ſhould, in the general, take-place in Youth; and the rather, as hereby a Barrier is formed againſt many very dangerous Temptations to which a ſingle Life is expoſed. Indeed,

There is a Time, &c. (under)

There is a Time when Perſons, even thoſe that have the moſt conſiderable Fortunes, ought ſeriouſly to think of beſtowing themſelves, leſt the Refuſal of their firſt Offers be attended with a long and bitter Repentance. The Reputation of their Riches generally decreaſes with Time of their Beauty; whilſt, on the contrary, every thing is favourable to a Young Lady, and Men are content to enlarge and heighten all the Advantages that can ſtir up their Paſſion, and make her worthy of their Application and Deſires. Love

Some Pretenders to a peculiar Refinement in Morals

Love, in its Infancy, lessens every Fault; in its Declension, it not only aggravates, but multiplies them. There is a vast Difference between the Disgusts that an old Engagement gives us, and the pleasing Inquietudes of a growing Passion.

Nulla Sed mentes, mobilis erunt Amor,
Sarcinæve rotæ tollitur omnis Amor.

In a new Amour we pass every Hour of the Day with fresh Satisfaction; it is an inexpressible Pleasure to find that our Love grows upon us every Minute. But in a Passion of an old Standing, our Time is spent very uneasily, in still loving less and less, or not at all; for the Endeavours to revive a decaying Passion generally extinguishes the Remains of it. — *Languida fordet Amor. Cum Formâ ut lapsus Amor.* — See No. 89, with the first Part of No. 281, of the Spectator.

The principal Inconveniencies of early Marriages are, that sometimes they have more Children than can be well supported, or else that the Son wishes to be Master too soon, or the Daughter begins to bloom before the Mother is content to fade; but those who marry late in Life labour under many more Disadvantages, not only because they are past their Prime, and their Prejudices and bad Habits are not likely to be removed by each other's Advice, but if they should have any Children, they will be likely to leave them to the wide World, or to a Guardian's Mercy; and if they should not die when their Children are very young, yet still they will either leave the World before their Children are old enough to become wife or great, or else the Parents will be so feeble by Age and Infirmities, as not to enjoy the Honour and Comforts that their Children might procure them. — Thus we see that altho' they have less to fear than those who marry in Youth, yet they have less to hope; and besides losing the Joys of early Love, and the Pleasure of uniting with pliant Manners, they are likely to have less Comforts, and more Inconveniencies, than those who marry when young. Serm. 363

rals think, however, that a single State is more conducive to the Perfection of our Nature, and to those sublime Improvements to which Religion calls us. (*)

Some

(*) The Pretence to raise Piety, in forbidding Marriage, to give more Time and Liberty for Devotion, rarely indeed fails to catch and seduce the Unwary. But, if they plead that their Meaning is not criminal, it can easily be proved, that their Meaning is as bad as their Practice: for, plausible as it is to weak Minds, it hath no Reason to support it; because it can never be pious, either in Design or Effect, to cancel any moral Obligation, or to make void any Command of God. Wherever the Divine Law, or Duty pleads, true Piety will always invite and draw Men to follow it: and if the Voice of Heaven, or even the Whispers of sound and uncorrupted Reason, point out the End, and direct the Pursuit, to set up any Will-Worship of our own in Opposition, is impious; too presumptuous for a Creature in Contradiction to his Creator.

The Pretence of serving him with greater Strictness, with more Fervency, or even Purity, will not excuse: because the Author of our Nature undoubtedly knew best what was fit and good for us, what we could bear, and how to direct us. Or,

Had the Law of God been silent in the Matter; yet Experience, which generally discovers, with sufficient Clearness and Certainty, the Will of Providence, hath every where evinced, that wherever they have had Authority to bring their Rules into Practice, they have eventually defeated very contrary Purposes, and so baffled the Pretence: for; instead of strengthening the Ties of Chastity, and preserving the Innocence of either Sex; they have, in Fact, promoted Lewdness, and been the Instruments of every scandalous Corruption.

As to the Pretence, that Marriage is an Hindrance to Piety, by immerging us too deeply in the Cares of the World; and of Course,

gives

Sometimes, indeed, the more important Duties we owe gives too little Time, and less Inclination, for the Duties of Retirement, Prayer, and Penance for Sin; we must observe, that as to Prayer, it may go along with every other Duty, and be performed in every State; for the Commands of God are not contradictory nor inconsistent with each other. "There is a Time and a Season for every Purpose: a Time to pray, and a Time to work." No State is without its Intermissions. It is only when the Concerns of Body and Soul interfere, that either is to be set aside, which they never do, when Both are duly proportioned. And,

As to Penances, those Formalities by which they teach, that Sin is to be purged and pardoned, they are never necessary, till after the Duties of our State have been first violated or neglected. Then, and then only, by a discreet Application, they may be of Service: but, so long as the Mind is pure, & the Body chaste, Neither have any need to be mortified; for the Command, in this Case, is not in Force, till after Pollution and Guilt have been incurred.

Not that we mean to condemn, in the gross, all those who have taken to these solitary Retirements: Many (it is charitably presumed) have been led into them, by sincere, tho' mistaken Principles; and many, possibly, may have lived in them without deviating from that Intent: This may be; but still it must be allowed, that these same Persons might have employed their Time and Talents more usefully in the World, by mixing and conversing with their Fellow-Creatures, mutually participating and conveying the common Blessings of Nature and Providence. This, undoubtedly, was the Will of their Creator, these the Purposes to which He appointed, and for which He made them. So that we are to consider them under a still stronger and higher Aggravation, both as Trespasses upon the common Rights of Nature, and as oppressive Yokes which it is not able to bear. To which few have ever submitted by Choice, and fewer

owe to the Publick, which could ſcarce be performed, or not ſo well in a married State, may require the ſingle Life, or render the other not ſo honourable a Station

ſtill, without a moſt bitter and ſorrowful Repentance afterwards.

This "forbidding to marry," (which St. Paul predicted as a great Corruption, that was to happen in the Chriſtian Church,) he calls "the Doctrine of Devils;" (1 Tim. iv. 1) and if the Doctrine be *devilish*, the Device is more ſo; worſe in Effect, and as bad almoſt in Kind, as that inhuman Cuſtom of ſacrificing Children to Molock; for ſo it is, that by the Authority of Parents' concurring to forward the Device, Thouſands, before they are at Diſcretion to chooſe, before they are capable of diſtinguiſhing Good from Evil, with an inhumanity far exceeding that of Jephtha, the devoted Victims of the Pride and Avarice of Parents and Kinſ-men, are yearly immured, and, like that unhappy Maid, left, not for Months, but for their whole Lives, "to bewail their Virginity."

It will not, it is preſumed, be neceſſary to reaſon longer upon the Matter, becauſe moſt of thoſe, for whoſe Uſe this is intended, are, it is believed, in this Inſtance Proteſtants by Complexion, more diſpoſed to the Freedoms of Society, than to the Auſterities of a Cloiſter. It is only, therefore, to be further obſerved, that whoever will be at the Pains to examine the Nature and Tendency of theſe Foundations, the Maxims upon which they are conducted, and the Rules by which they are governed, will eaſily perceive that they have all one common End, and only ſure Mark at which they aim, [viz] the Pride of the Undertakers and Managers; the founding and enlarging of a temporal Power, by the Abuſe and Corruption of a ſpiritual One, and are all of them ſo many iniquitous Plots againſt the common Privileges of Nature; Snares to Virtue, wherein Thouſands have been corrupted and undone; who, had they never come there, might have eſcaped both Pollution and Guilt.

Station in such Circumstances; but, surely, it must be improving to the social Affections to direct them to particular Objects whom we esteem, and to whom we stand in the nearest Relation, and to ascertain the Exercise in a Field of Action, which is both agreeable in itself, and highly advantageous to Society. (*)

The constant Exercise of natural Affection, in which we are necessarily engaged in providing for, and training up our Children, opens the Heart, and must inure the Mind to frequent Acts of Self-denial and Self-command, and consequently strengthen the Habits of Goodness.

But to this we have an Objection, and that too, by One who was a Prodigy of Understanding and Learning (‡) "He that hath WIFE and CHILDREN, hath given Hostages to Fortune; for they are Impediments to

(*) A *single* State is, doubtless, preferable to a *married* One, where Prudence and Affection do not accompany the Choice; but, where they do, there is no terrestrial Happiness equal to the married State which, upon the Christian Scheme, is calculated for the Happiness of Mankind. All Conditions have their peculiar Calamities. (See No. 66. of the Spectator) But most of the Miseries which are imputed to That State are really owing to the Abuse of it; for we ought to remember that the Man or Woman who is a Fool before Marriage, will not be changed by a Miracle after it; but if there be good Sense on either Side, this may be a natural Means of their becoming wise. *Minima de Malis.* (‡) L'd Bacon's Essay, Serm. CCCLXIII.

to great Enterprizes, either of Virtue or Mischief. Perpetuity by Generation is common to Beasts; but Memory, Merit, and noble Works are proper to Men; and consequently the best Works, and those of the greatest Merit to the Publick, have been performed by Unmarried or childless Men; who have sought to express the Images of their Minds, where those of their Bodies have failed; in both Affection and Means, marrying and endowing the Publick; the Care of Posterity being, thus, most in them that have none."

We shall consider, therefore, how far This is true, and whether there is any thing in the Allegation, except the Authority of the Man who said it, to give it Credit or Weight.

As to Enterprises of Mischief, we readily agree with him, and consent to give it all the Authority you will; indeed, we own that we never see a single Man, who hath passed the current Age of Celibacy, where no particular Security arises from his Profession or Character, but we think we see an unsafe Subject, and a very dangerous Instrument for any Mischief, that his own Parts may inspire, or other Men's may prompt him to. (*) — And, As

(*) Unmarried Men are best Friends, best Masters, and best Servants but not always best Subjects, for they are light to run away; and almost all Fugatives are of That Condition. "Where no Hedge

In,

As to Atchievements of Virtue, a Diſtinction certainly ought to be made; becauſe, in common Acceptation, there is a Variety of things which paſs under That Name, and generally applauded, which, in fair Account, do not deſerve it.

A ſingle Man, as he hath fewer Uſes for Money than a married Man, may be likelier, at his Demiſe, to leave a Fund, for building a Church, an Hoſpital, or the like, from the View, perhaps, of commuting for thoſe very Treſpaſſes which his Celibacy had run him into: (*) or to leave a Name at his Death, which he had not Senſe or Virtue enough to raiſe in Life, – of ſuch

is, there the Poſſeſſion is ſpoiled - and he that hath no Wife will wander up and down. Who will truſt a Thief well-appointed, that ſkippeth from City to City? So, who will believe a Man that hath no Houſe, and lodgeth whereſoever the Night taketh him?"

(*) *Auferre et ſpoliant, Extaquè Dona ferunt.*
Eripiunt aliis, quod aliis largiantur.

It is in vain for Perſons, who by Acts of Injuſtice, Oppreſſion, and Fraud amaſs to themſelves large Eſtates, to think to atone for their Rapine, &c. by doing ſome charitable Acts while they are alive, or, when they can no longer poſſeſs them, by leaving their Lands in *Mortmain* to pious and charitable Uſes: (commendable indeed when done from a truly Chriſtian Charity.) But they who think, in this Way, to atone for their Sins, entertain an Opinion highly diſhonourable to the Juſtice of God. "For he that ſacrificeth of a thing wrongfully gotten, his Offering is ridiculous: the Gifts of unjuſt Men are not accepted." Serm. CCCLXIII.

ſuch Piety we have, it is true, many fair Monuments in the World; but then, if we conſider, that it is by the Vices, moſtly, of ſuch Perſons that ſome of theſe Foundations are at all neceſſary, the Merit of the Atchievement is much leſſened, if not entirely deſtroyed; and the Argument, ſo far, loſes of its Weight. — But,

Not to inſiſt upon this, all Hiſtory witneſſeth againſt the Aſſertion. It is there undeniably plain that moſt of the great Heroes of the World, Law-givers, Soldiers, and Philoſophers, have been all MARRIED Men; A Regard to Poſterity hath carried Arms, Arts and Literature, further than any other Motive ever did or could. Who is ſo likely to be influenced by this Regard, as they who are to leave behind them the Darlings and Pledges of their Affection, in whom they hope to have their Names continued, and all the Fruits of their Study, Toil, and Exploits, abiding and permanent.

On the other Hand, how rare is it to ſee an unmarried Perſon to carry his Views further than the ſhort Term of his own tranſitory Being, being confined to the Gratification of his own Humour and Senſes? Self is his only Concern; and Eaſe and Pleaſure his only Purſuit. — And,

If the Utility of it, with Regard to the Publick, be ſo great, its Advantages in private Life are rather more obvious. By this ſweet and intimate Union, how are the

the Hearts of Men cheared and comforted? Every Evil of Life alleviated and leſſened; every Joy of it raiſed and improved: – Where the Diſpoſitions ſuit, and are mutually ſweet, it is ſo bliſful, ſo truly paradiſaical, that he who is in it, would ſcarcely deſire to change it for another. (*) It hath this, the greateſt and only Inconvenience, that it ties our Affections too faſt to the World; ſo faſt, that we are with Difficulty weaned of that Affection, and hardly torn but by Violence from it.

Without this Partnerſhip, hardly any Condition or Fortune yields much Content. Men who are continually engaged in Study, or Buſineſs, or anxiouſly intent on publick Concerns, are apt to grow moroſe and ſevere, on Account of the frequent Jars they meet with, or the Fatigues they undergo in ſuch a Courſe. The FEMALE Softneſs is, therefore, uſeful to moderate their Severity, and change their Ill-humour into domeſtick Tenderneſs, and a ſofter Kind of Humanity; (†) and thus their Minds, which were overſtrained by the Intenſeneſs of their Application, are at once relaxed and returned with the greater Aptneſs to publick

(*) *Diſtat in his Uxor placida a Meretrice rapaci:*
Illa mœſtæ Cajus aggravat, illa juvat.

(†) Love refines a Man's Behaviour. A fine Face is the fineſt of Sights; and the Voice of her One loves, the ſweeteſt Harmony in the World. Serm. CCCLXIII.

lick Action. The Minds of both Sexes are as much formed one for the other, by a Temperament peculiar to each, as their Perſons. The Strength, Firmneſs, Courage, Gravity and Dignity of the Man, tally to the Softneſs, Delicacy, Tenderneſs of Paſſion, Elegance of Taſte, and Decency of Converſation of the Woman. (*) — The Male-Mind is formed to defend, deliberate, foreſee, contrive, and adviſe. (‡) The Female to confide, imagine, apprehend, comply, and execute. Therefore, the proper Temperament of theſe different Sexes of Minds, makes an exquiſitely fine moral Union; and the well-proportioned Oppoſition of different and contrary Qualities, like a due Mixture of Diſcords in a Compoſition of Muſick, ſwells the Harmony of Society more than if they were all Uniſons to each other.

And this Union of moral Sexes, (if we may ſo expreſs it) is evidently more conducive to the Improvement of each, than if they lived apart: for the Man not

(*) *Concordia diſcors.* See No. 57, 121, 433, and 434. of the Spectator.

(‡) *Miſi Sermonum optima Semina Mulieres ſuſcipiunt, Participes Eruditionis Virorum ſunt; abſurda multa, pravaque Conſilia atque Cogitationes & Affectus malos pariunt,*

There is nothing ſo much worth as a Mind well inſtructed. Good-Breeding is learnt from the Converſation of the Ladies, and Good Humour from Men; the One teaches us Gallantry, the Other Wiſdom.

not only protects & adviſes, but communicates Strength and Reſolution to the Woman; whilſt She, in her Turn, ſoftens, refines and poliſhes the Man: In her Society he finds Repoſe from Action and Care; in her Friendſhip, the Ferment into which his Paſſions were wrought by the Hurry and Diſtraction of publick Life, ſubſides and ſettles into a Calm; (*) and a thouſand nameleſs Graces and Decencies that flow from her Words and Actions, form him for a more mild and elegant Deportment. (‡) His Converſation and

(*) Men may not brook to be told, that for the Virtue many of them have, they are indebted ſolely to the Advice and Example of their Wives, agreeably inſinuated at Seaſons, when none other can reach them; and operating in a Variety of Ways, that no Words can deſcribe, nor any Judgment but theirs, who are ever with them, and about them, can dictate; as may be ſeen from the many Inſtances of ſuch as turn abandoned Profligates, to the Ruin of their Affairs and Families, who were tolerably ſober and decent whilſt they had the Awe and Advantage of a faithful Female Adviſer.

"Bleſſed is the Man that hath a virtuous Wife, for the Number of his Days ſhall be double. A virtuous Woman rejoiceth her Huſband, and he ſhall fulfil the Years of his Life in Peace."

(‡) *Saepè Venit magnus Furor è virtus Amor.*

The World would be a Deſart, were it not for the Society of the Fair-Sex; and the moſt poliſhed Part of Mankind would appear but like Hermits in Maſquerade, or a Kind of civiliſed Satyrs; ſo imperfect & unaccompliſhed are we without the Reunion of that ſubſtantial and integral Part of us, which was firſt taken from us for their

and Example, on the other Hand, enlarge her Views, raiſe

Formation. They are the Guardians of our Infancy & Youth, the Companions of our riper Years, and the Cheriſhers of our Old Age. From the Cradle to the Grave we are wrapt in a Circle of Obligations to them for their Love and good Offices, and he is a Monſter in Nature who returns them not the Careſſes of an innocent Affection, and the ſpotleſs Sallies of Virtue, Love, and Gratitude.

Love is the Soul of the World, the vital Prop of the Elements, it is the goodly Cement of human Society, and the ſtrongeſt Fence in Nature. Earth would be a Torment without it, neither can there be any Heaven where This is abſent. Commerce with Females ſhd be as general as is their Number that deſerve it, whoſe Knowledge and Virtue will be a ſufficient Security againſt criminal Familiarity, and from the Reflection of the World. Reaſon itſelf will appear more eloquent in the Mouth of an innocent Female, than in that of the moſt florid Orator, and there are no Figures in the whole Syſtem of Rhetorick ſo moving and forcible as the peculiar Graces of that Sex. — It is believed that Men can boaſt of no Endowments of Mind, which Women poſſeſs not, with as great, or greater Eminence. There have been Muſes as well as Amazons, and no Age or Nation, but has produced ſome Females renowned for Wiſdom and Virtue; ſo that the Converſation of Women is no leſs uſeful than pleaſant, and the Dangers which attend their Commerce are abundantly recompenced by vaſt Advantages. Indeed, It will be a little hard to ſay that Women are naturally inferior to Men, when it is conſidered how much extrinſick Weight is put in the Balance to turn it on the Men's Side. Men have their Parts cultivated and improved by Education, refined and ſubtiliſed by Learning and Arts; like an incloſed Piece of Common, which, by Induſtry and Improvement, becomes ſuperior to the reſt, tho' the natural Turf owned no ſuch Inequality. And truly, had Women the ſame Advantage, doubtleſs, they would make the ſame Return of it.

Some,

mise her Sentiments, sustain her Resolutions, and free her

Some of those few that have been tried, have been eminent in several Parts of Learning. Let them, therefore, not charge God foolishly, nor think that by making them Women, He necessitates them to be proud and wanton, vain and pensile, since it is manifest He made them to better Purpose, and was not partial to the other Sex; but that having (as the Prophet speaks) Abundance of Spirit, He equally dispensed it, and gave the feeblest Woman as large and capacious a Soul, as that of the greatest Hero. After all, The eternal, wise Being seems to have placed them in more advantageous Circumstances than He has done Men. He has planted in them some native Propensions, which must facilitate the Operations of Grace upon them. Besides, There are many Temptations to which Men are exposed, that are not in their Way.

How hard is it for a Man to converse in the World, but he shall be importuned by Excess, and forfeit his Sobriety, to maintain the Reputation of a sociable Creature? How liable are Men, by a promiscuous Conversation among a Variety of Humours, to meet with some Affronts, which the Maxims of Honour will tell them must (in Despight of all Christian Interdicts) be revenged; which engages them in Quarrels, and sometimes in Murders.

Now, none of these things are incident to Women; they must indeed, and from other Instances, attack Temptation, and abandon their Sex, and the whole Economy of their Estate, before they can divest themselves of their Innocence. So that God seems, in many Particulars, to have closer fenced them in, and not left them to their wilder Excursions, for which the customary Liberties of the other Sex afford a more open Way.

In short, They have so many Advantages towards Virtue, that tho' the Philosopher (*Socrates*) made it one of his solemn Acknowledgments to God, that He had made him a *Man*, and not a *Woman*;

her from a thousand Fears and Inquietudes, to which her

yet, doubtless, Christian Women have now Reason enough to invert that Form, and to thank God that He has made them Women, and not Men.

How many Women do we read of in the Gospel, who, in all the Duties of assiduous Attendance on Christ, Liberalities of Love and Respect, nay even in Zeal and Courage, surpassed the Apostles themselves. We find his Cross surrounded, his Passion celebrated, by the avowed Tears and Lamentations of devout Women, when the most courageous of his Disciples had denied and forsworn him, and all the rest had forsaken him: nay, even Death itself could not extinguish their Love; we find the devout Marys designing a laborious, chargeable, and perhaps, hazardous Respect to his Corpse; and accordingly it is a memorable Attestation Christ gives to their Piety, by making them the first Witnesses of his Resurrection, the prime Evangelists to declare the glad Tidings.

Nor is the Devotion of that Sex to be found only in the sacred Records, the primitive Times have left us many Memorials of the like, and the Martyrologies are full of Female Sufferers, of all Ages and Conditions, who, by the Fervour of their Zeal, had overcame the Timorousness of their Natures, and wearied the Cruelty of their Persecutors. And,

As Women helped to augment the Number of Martyrs, so did they of Confessors, in a stout Owning, and diligent Practice of Christianity. Queens and Empresses knew no Title to glorious, as That of nursing Mothers to the Church, and have often exchanged their large and magnificent Palaces, for little retired Cells, and private Oratories; and valued not their own Diadems in Comparison with their Saviour's Crown of Thorns.

And though by a perpetual Declination from their Pristine Zeal, the Examples have in every Age grown less numerous, yet none

her more feeble Constitution subjects her. Surely such Dispositions, and the happy Consequences which result from them, cannot be supposed to carry an unfriendly Aspect to any Duty we owe either to God, or Man. — Again,

Another Sort of Objectors to the Subject before us, are those, who under the Pretence of Liberty, plead against it as a Curb to their Vices; for, whilst it is held in Honour, it stops the Issues of Sin, by restraining Concupiscence, more effectually than any thing in the World besides.

A Humour this, so inconsistent with common Sense, and every social dear Regard, must stand self-detected.

none has wanted some very illustrious Patterns, enough to credit and ennoble the female World.

History and daily Experience must convince all that their natural Powers are more quick and lively than Men's, and if they had equal Advantages of Education, perhaps they would not be inferior to Men in Judgment or profound Learning.

The virtuous Love of Women being natural to us; it is evident that those who hate them, offer Violence to Nature and sin against God. All civilized Nations have treated Women with Respect, and as their Souls are equally valuable with Men, as the Gospel allows them the same Privileges, and as we know that a great Number of them have been, and are equally eminent for Piety with any Men, they are undoubtedly entitled to an equal Share of Attention, Affection, and Respect.

ed. (*) Indeed, to the Honour of the preſent Age, the few Patrons it hath, are as deſpicable as they are diſſolute: but it may be obſerved that the Pains taken to correct it, would poſſibly meet with quicker Succeſs, did not the Fair Sex, by their own lewd and wanton Behaviour, contribute to keep it up: without Encouragement from them it could never have run to the Extravagance it has; for, how little ſoever ſome of them may ſuſpect, or believe it, They are the only ſure Guardians of Men's Virtue, and have the only Power to reform them.

If, therefore, the Manners of the Age, ſtill continue thus diſſolute, though they may be the principal Sufferers, they muſt bear the Blame, and the Infamy too; for this Reaſon, that it is always in their Power to ſupport the Honour and Dignity due to the married State, from the Influence, which but few of them want to be told, they have over the Affections and Inclinations of Mankind. I

(*) *Nil adeo ſeſe prius, inclinat nil cuilibet Vitâ.*

Libertiſm, by looſening and cancelling the Ties of all Order, Law, and Decency, would quickly introduce ſuch Confuſion as would be inſufferable, and throw the World back into that State which preceded and brought on its Deſolation, as the Puniſhment for its Wickedneſs, its almoſt entire Deſtruction: for ſo the ſacred Writings repreſent it to us, when Men, following no other Law, than the Impulſe of Brutal Appetite, "took them Wives of all which they choſe," promiſcuouſly, without Diſcretion or Decency, without Regard to Age or Affinity.

I will offer no Apology, therefore, for ſaying that if their Diſcretion was equal to their Charms; if they were at equal Pains to embelliſh their Minds, as they are to adorn their Bodies, they might go near to reverſe the Cuſtoms of the World, and the Maxims of Nature; might ſway the Scepters of Kingdoms, and be the Law-givers and Governors both of States and Families, without either wearing of Arms, or changing Apparel.

It is plain, and it is happy moſtly for the Family where it falls out, that where that "Apple of Gold, in Picture of Silver," Beauty and Virtue meet, they bear an irreſiſtible Sway over the Hearts of Men; and where the Heart is enſlaved, the Will is too faſt chained to be free; for the ſame Link will always draw both. How many impetuous and daring Spirits, who have awed even their Sovereigns, and made whole Senates tremble, have been ſeen ſervilely crouching to draw the Smiles of a Wife; and the Conquerors of the World, for thoſe and other little Endearments, fain to lay all their Trophies and Laurels at their Feet, ſatisfied, as with a full Reward, as if this had been the End and Aim of all their Toil.

If Modeſty, therefore, good Senſe, and the general Practice of Virtue, met with proper Diſtinction in female Regard, Men would certainly take more Pains

than they uſually do to cultivate thoſe Graces; for, where we court, we wiſh to be approved, and naturally purſue ſuch Courſes as we judge will beſt recommend us: but, whilſt Women are ſo inſenſible and blind to their own Intereſt and Happineſs, as to encourage thoſe moſt who uſe this holy Inſtitute to baſe and diſhonourable Purpoſes; whilſt they prefer empty and profligate Rakes to virtuous and honourable Admirers, (*) they may thank themſelves for a great Share of that Miſery which befals them, and we ſhall in vain hope to ſee the Evil of this Caſe ever corrected.

Be this as it may, the Advantages of this ſolemn Inſtitution to the general State of the World, and all the particular Societies of it, are enough to keep up its Credit with the virtuous and reaſonable of both Sexes, and, upon fair Account, to over-balance any thing which the voluptuous and diſſolute have to ſay againſt it. In a Word, where it finds Men virtuous, it generally keeps them ſo; and, where it finds them immoral or vicious, it as often reclaims them: the Strength, Grandeur and Security of every State depends upon it, as their Numbers are multiplied, (‡) and the Orders and

(*) See No. 156 of the Spectator, with the 2d Letter in No. 151.

(‡) Whether *Ancient* or *Modern* Nations were moſt populous, (tho it is a Queſtion of Diſ) I ſhall not here examine; but only obſerve, that

and proper training of the People, more quickly and properly ſecured in lawful Wedlock; than in any other Way.

that if the divine Law, in this Caſe, had been every where obeyed, according to its ſtrict Intendment, the Odds, long ſince, muſt have been greatly on the Side of the *Moderns*; ſince Writers, in Favour of the *Ancients*, aſſign and inſiſt always upon the Depopulation and Waſte by the *Monaſtick* Orders and Nunneries, as one of the greateſt Cauſes of the Decay among Moderns. So,

Whether in thoſe Countries where the Plurality of Wives is indulged, the Increaſe be as great, as among us, where but only One is lawful, no ſufficient Number of Facts, properly attefted, have been hitherto produced, to reaſon upon, ſo as to determine with Certainty: the moſt accurate modern Accounts, (if we may truſt to them) would lead us to believe that it is not ſo, in One Thing, they plainly contradict Experience; [viz] that all the great Tranſmigrations, and thoſe numerous Multitudes, that have gone out from one Quarter, and over-run and ſettled in Others, have conſtantly iſſued from thoſe Parts where this divine Inſtitute is ſtrictly obſerved, and Polygamy forbid. See Arguments againſt this Vice, in Vol. xiv. Page 299, &c.

Sermon

SERMON CCCLXIV.

On the same Subject.
Rules for it.

Heb. xiii. 4. "Marriage is honourable in all."

The Lawfulness and Expediency of Marriage being already proved, – we proceed to consider how this important Engagement may be entered upon and conducted, so as most to promote our present Satisfaction, and future Peace and Welfare.

To the Publick (as we have seen) the Advantages are certain and follow, whether the Parties will or no; but to the Parties themselves, not so. To them "it is a Fountain that sendeth forth both sweet Waters and bitter." (*) To those who mind their Duty and Obligations, "sweet;" but to those who neglect them, "bitter." For this Reason, as it is a Business of the greatest Importance, and a State and Condition of Life not afterwards to be altered, we cannot make it with too much Reverence and Deliberation. To

(*) *Amor et Mella et Fella est fœcundissimus.*
Love is called a delicious Poison, a pleasing Bitter, an agreeable Malady, and a delightful Punishment.

To this Purpoſe, the Concurrence of Parents and Friends, therefore, will ever be an Object of great Conſequence with virtuous and conſiderate young People. The tender Affection of thoſe from whom under God they received their Exiſtence, the juſt Authority with which Nature has inveſted them, and the Prudence and Experience they derive from Age, are all ſtriking Reaſons why Children ſhould pay a religious Regard to their Judgment, Advice, and Conſent in all Affairs, but eſpecially in theſe Matters. And it is an Argument of very commendable good Senſe and Diſcretion in Youth, ſo to conduct themſelves in the Management of this important Buſineſs as to ſecure, if poſſible, the Approbation and Reſpect of all around them.

(under) But

Ties, and cemented by an Interchange of the moſt intereſting Obligations.

Numbers, who ſet out with theſe Advantages, inſenſibly decline into Indifference and Diſguſt. And, this, not from the Want of neceſſary Qualifications on either Side, nor through any Imprudence which their moſt intimate Friends can obſerve; but from an Error in the Foundation of their Plan — that being too much elated in their Proſpects (*) — enamoured with Beauty

(*) *Quid proderit, ſi te congelet Uxor Anus?*
Si quæ volet apte nubere, nubo pari. Men
Senn. CCCLXIV.

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(*) *Amor et Mella et Fella est facundissimus.*
Love is called a delicious Poison, a pleasing Bitter, an agreeable Malady, and a delightful Punishment.

But what demands the principal Attention of thoſe who mean to form this Connection, is the Subſiſtence of a ſincere Friendſhip and cordial Affection between themſelves. Without this the Duties of the Marriage-ſtate will be ill diſcharged, and the Happineſs it propoſes never attained. Previous, therefore, to either Party's ſuffering their Affections to be engaged, it will certainly be their Intereſt to conſider well what Prudence ſuggeſts, on this Important Point.

We ſhould carefully examine our Conſtitutions, Temper, &c. ☞ (under)

tions, Temper and Honeſty; weigh well if we can be conſtant and confine our Deſires and Appetites to one ſole Object; we muſt call Reaſon into our Paſſions and let her inform us WHY we ſhould marry; for, if we take to ourſelves a Partner for Life with no other Conſideration than the Expectation of Scenes of Dalliance, and think of it only as a State to adminiſter to the Gratification of Deſire; when that Deſire once flags, all Charms and Merit, on either Side, will likewiſe be abated.

We may often obſerve, that many amiable Qualities and a ſincere mutual Affection, at the Beginning, are not ſufficient to ſecure a Continuance of Happineſs between the Perſons joined by the moſt ſolemn Ties, and cemented by an Interchange of the moſt intereſting Obligations.

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(*) *Quid prodeſt, ſi te congelat Uxor Anus?*
Si quid velis apte nubere, nube pari. Men
Senn. CCCLXIV.

ty, (*) and fondly terminating their Hopes in each other,

Men, who marry for Riches, many Times bring into their Families an insupportable Mistress. — "A Woman, if she maintain her Husband, is full of Anger, Impudence, and much Reproach."

In Marriage, therefore, prefer the Person before Wealth; Virtue before Beauty; and the Mind before the Body; then you have a *Wife*, a *Friend*, and a *Companion*. — *Multæ sunt in magnis Dotibus Incommoditates, Sumptusque intolerabiles: nam quæ indotata est, ea in Potestate est Viri. Dotatæ mactant, et Malo et Damno, Viros.*

"Better is an Handful with Quietness, than both the Hands full with Travail and Vexation of Spirit. Better is a Dinner of Herbs, where Love is, than a stalled Ox, and Hatred therewith."

It is better to have a Competency, with the Pleasures of mutual Love, and an agreeable Intercourse with those, whom we value and esteem, than vast accumulated Wealth, joined to Profusion and Extravagance, together with that Hatred, and Strife, and Envy, which so frequently accompany them. See No. 149, of the Spectator, with the 2d Letter in No. 268, and the latter Part of 199.

If marrying for Wealth only, has so many Disadvantages attending it, as do frequently more than over-balance every other Advantage in it, what can be said for those who take unfair Methods to procure it? See this spoken to, in No. 311, of the Spectator.

(*) *Ex Aspectu nascitur Amor. Oculi sunt in Amore Duces.*

Ipse Alimenta sibi maxima præbet Amor.

Love seizes on us suddenly, without giving us Time to reflect; our Dispositions, our Weaknesses favour the Surprize—One Look, one Glance, fixes & determines us—*Nullis Amor est medicabilis Herbis.*

Young Hearts are tender and flexible, and apt to take strong, as well as sudden Impressions from Beauty.

Flammens accensis Ignibus ardet Amor.

Volans alit Venis, et cæco carpitur Igni.

——— *Libertas*

other, and forgetting their immediate Dependance on the Almighty, he has refused them that Bleſſing without which no Union can ſubſiſt. (*) It

—— Libertas nulli jam vellat amanti,
Nullus liber erit, ſi quis amare velit.

And, as the Iſſues of this Paſſion are of the greateſt Moment in Life, a thouſand Circumſtances, therefore, are to regulate its Raſhneſs, for Fear of being captivated by an improper Object, in the careſſing of whom, Parents may be diſobeyed, and Friends diſobliged.

Id non temerè aggrediendum, quod, ſemel factum, mutari non poſſit.

(*) There are doubtleſs, many unhappy Marriages in the World; ſtill the Fault is not in the Inſtitution; and if a Man hath chanced ill, it is Odds he either had not Diſcernment firſt to chuſe well, or Prudence to manage well afterwards, or brought with him unreaſonable Computations, and falſely reckoned upon Matters.

Mr. Addiſon, and ſome other Writers have occaſionally treated of many little Improprieties, which Perſons in the Marriage Relation are apt, through Inadvertency, to give into. Their Inſtructions upon theſe Heads are worthy of Notice, but none of them, we think, go to the Bottom of this Subject.

The great Impropriety, and the firſt Cauſe of every other Miſcarriage, is, our unhappy Propenſity to propoſe a Reſt and Satisfaction thereby in the *Creature*. So far as we attempt this, the Lord, either in Mercy or Judgment, will aſſuredly diſappoint us, and multiply the Sorrows of thoſe who, in ſo notorious a Manner, preſume to ſeek after another God; for he is jealous of his Honour, and will not give it to our Idols.

What is it, in ſuch Caſes, that Men generally call being happy? If it be Joy, as we doubt it is, that flows in with a full conſtant and equal Tide, without Interruption and without Allay, they miſreckon; there is no ſuch thing in human Nature, Man's State on

It is the Holy Scriptures alone that furniſh us with Rules or Motives, ſufficient to direct and animate us in the various Relations of Life; eſpecially in This, which is of all others the moſt honourable, the moſt intimate, and the moſt important. (*) To

Earth, doth not admit of this. To reap the Comforts of any Condition, there are Seaſons and Occaſions, where every One muſt deny himſelf, and thwart a preſent Appetite or Inclination: every Relation too hath its peculiar Duties and Laws, and there is no Reaſon why That ſhould be complained of as intolerable in this, which is the indiſpenſible Law of every other.

Let Love, therefore, tie the Knot; let Hearts be joined, as well as Hands, and all the little Incidents which are the common Occaſions of Strife and Vexation will rarely happen; or, if they do, find an eaſy Remedy. Where there is mutual Love, there will be a mutual Deſire to pleaſe, and Deſire will both beget and quicken Endeavour; it will either prevent or extinguiſh every ſuſpicious Jealouſy, diſpoſe the Party in the wrong to make ſuitable Acknowlegements, and the other grateful Requitals. When aſunder, it in will inflame them with a Deſire to ſhorten Abſence; when together, it will be the Spring of laſting Satisfaction; they will part with Regret, and meet with Joy. See No. 261 of the Spectator.

They who are cautious and diſcreet in their Choice, ſeldom find Reaſon to repent. Wiſdom in Men, and Chaſtity in Women ſhould weigh moſt in that Balance, which is to determine their mutual Choices; for the ſtrongeſt Bond of Chaſtity and Obedience in the Wife, is the Opinion ſhe hath of her Huſband's Wiſdom; and the ſtrongeſt Bond of the Huſband's Love is the Opinion he hath of the Wife's Modeſty and Virtue.

(*) It is the moſt honourable, as inſtituted by God himſelf, and appointed as a Type or Emblem of the Love and indiſſoluble Union between

To treat the Subject we are upon in its full Extent, would lead us far beyond the Limits we have propoſed. To point out and illuſtrate, the Nature, Riſe, Improvement & Properties of that peculiar Sympathy of Soul, which takes-place, in thoſe whoſe Hearts as well as Hands are joined in Marriage, as it reſembles the Joy of a good Conſcience, is therefore, hard to be repreſented to thoſe who have not felt it, and impoſſible to be deſcribed, but by Experience. (*) Con-

between Chriſt and his Church; in which Reſpect the Apoſtle ſcruples not to call it a great Myſtery. It is likewiſe the moſt intimate for the Reaſons juſt mentioned, and becauſe it is expreſsly ordained to ſuperſede all other Relations and Connections; "for this Cauſe ſhall a Man leave his Father and Mother, and cleave to his Wife, and they two ſhall be one Fleſh." — And it is by far the moſt important, as having a neceſſary Influence, either good or bad, upon every future Action and Circumſtance of our Lives, which cannot be ſaid of any other of our Engagements.

(*) Cicero, treating of the many Degrees of human Commerce and Society, places Matrimony in the firſt Rank; *Prima Societas in ipſo eſt Conjugio*. It is deſcribed as a State capable of the higheſt human Felicity, as an Inſtitution meant for a conſtant Scene of as much Delight as our Being is capable of; it is the Foundation of Community, and the chief Bond of Society; as it is, or ought to be, that State of perfect Friendſhip, in which there are, according to Pythagoras, Σωματα μεν δυο. Ψυχη δε μια — Two Bodies, but One Soul.

The Spirit of Love has certainly ſomething in it extremely fine; yet, if Love be any Refinement, Conjugal Love muſt be ſo in a much higher Degree. The frivolous Affectation of attracting Eyes,

Conjugal Affection, wherever it appears, exhibits the faireſt Proſpect of human Happineſs, though too often, like a beautiful Edifice raiſed upon an inſufficient Foundation, gives the greater Diſaſter to thoſe who periſh under its Ruins. (*)

But, when the Plan is laid, and the Building conducted by the Rules of true Religion, it reſts upon an immoveable Baſis, and ſtands ſuperior to the Aſſaults of either Time or Change. (‡) This is a Theme not eaſily

is there improved into ſolid Affection, and ſinks into the Heart.

The Paſſion of Love, even when it is moſt ſincere, reſembles too much the Flame of a Fever; That to a Wife, is like the vital Heat.

What a ſenſible Pleaſure is there in contemplating beautiful Inſtances of domeſtic Life! how is Happineſs heightened to the higheſt Degree it is capable of, when two Perſons of accompliſhed Minds, are not only united in Intereſt and Affections, but in their Taſte of the ſame Improvements, Pleaſures, and Diverſions! When habitual Complacency ſweetens their Satisfaction! When Love and Tenderneſs ſhine in their Countenance! and all their Words and Actions are ſo many Teſtimonies of mutual Comfort!

(*) ——— ——— *Et celſæ graviore caſu*
Decidunt Turres. ———
The Tower that higheſt rears its Head,
With heavieſt Ruin falls. ———

(‡) Two Perſons who have choſen each other out of all the Species, with a Deſign to be each other's mutual Comfort and Entertainment, have, in That Action, bound themſelves to be good-humoured, affable, diſcreet, forgiving, patient, and joyful, with Reſpect to each other's Frailties and Perfections, to the End of their Lives.

The

eaſily exhauſted – but we here chiefly write for the Benefit of thoſe whoſe Temper or Circumſtances inclining them to a married Life, have yet their Choice to make.

Few Perſons, warm in the Purſuit of their own Inclinations, and who rely on the Sufficiency of their own Judgments, will be either pleaſed or profited by any thing we here can offer; but thoſe who are truly ſerious will ſee the Expediency of the following Rules. We recommend them as Preliminaries, which, if duly attended to, will make the Purſuit eaſy, and the Poſſeſſion ſafe; but if neglected, it is ſcarcely poſſible but that the beſt laid Deſigns muſt end in Diſappointment and Diſguſt. (*) Who-

The Wiſer of the two (and it always happens that One of them is ſuch) will, for her or his own Sake, keep things from Outrage with the utmoſt Sanctity

When this Union is thus preſerved, the moſt indifferent Circumſtance a miniſters Delight. Their Condition is an endleſs Source of new Gratifications. The married Man can ſay, If I am unacceptable to all the World beſide, there is One whom I entirely love, that will receive me with Joy & Tranſport, and think herſelf obliged to double her Kindneſs and Careſſes of me from the Gloom with which ſhe ſees me overcaſt. I need not diſſemble the Sorrow of my Heart to be agreeable there, where every Sorrow quickens her Affection.

This Paſſion towards each other, when once well fixed, enters into the very Conſtitution and the Kindneſs flows as eaſily and ſilently as the Blood in the Veins.

(*) Marriage enlarges the Scene of our Happineſs or Miſery; Serm. CCCLXIV. the

Whoever, therefore, would hope for Comfort upon good Grounds in the Marriage Relation, muſt, in the firſt Place, humbly ſubmit himſelf and his Deſigns entirely to the Diſpoſal of the Almighty, and earneſtly ſeek the Direction of his Wiſdom and Providence. (*)

It was a great Fault in the Iſraelites, that they preſumed to make a common League of Amity with the People of Gibeon, without firſt inquiring of the Lord. Much more raſh and imprudent muſt it be for a Chriſtian to enter into ſo cloſe an Union, under no better Guidance than his own partial and blinded Judgment. We have a promiſe, that if we "acknowledge God in all our Ways, he will direct our Paths;" but if we reject his Profer, and will chuſe for ourſelves, what can we expect, but to be filled with our own Devices, and where

the Marriage is Love is pleaſant, the Marriage of Intereſt eaſy, and a Marriage where both meet, happy. An happy Marriage has in it all the Pleaſures of Friendſhip, all the Enjoyment of Senſe and Reaſon, and indeed, all the Sweets of Life. Nothing, therefore, can be a greater Mark of a degenerate and vicious Age, than the common Ridicule which paſſes on this State of Life. It is, indeed, only happy in thoſe who can look down with Scorn or Neglect on the Impieties of the Times, and tread the Paths of Life together in a conſtant uniform Courſe of Virtue.

(*) As Matches are made in Heaven, (according to the common Obſervation,) we cannot, therefore, reaſonably expect, nor will the Marriage State prove happy, in any laſting Degree, without the Bleſſing of Heaven (firſt and frequently implored) concurs to make it ſo.

where we have ſown the Wind, to reap the Whirlwind?

And, as it is neceſſary to begin this great Deſign in Submiſſion to the Will of God; ſo it muſt, with Reſpect to the End, be conducted with Subordination to his Glory. Thus far the Heathens themſelves attained in Theory, however they fell ſhort in Practice. Both theſe Rules are compriſed in one Line by the Poet, (*) and he deduces all the Calamities of the State, as well as the Diſorders in private Life, from the Neglect of them.

Surely then, it muſt be highly unſuitable for Chriſtians to propoſe their own Convenience or Satisfaction as their chief, much more their only View, in any Undertaking. (‡) We cannot, conſiſtently with our Profeſſion, either entreat or expect a Bleſſing upon ſuch of our Deſigns as terminate in ourſelves: ſo far as we can, upon the cloſeſt Conſideration, foreſee the Circumſtances and Engagements which our new Relation may

(*) *Hoc ergo Principium, Hoc tibi finis Erit.*
To Him your firſt Deſigns commend;
To Him refer your purpoſed End.

(‡) It is hard to determine which is moſt troubleſome to a Man of Senſe, either the extreme Reſerve and Shyneſs of ſome Women in the firſt Place, or their Fondneſs afterwards. It is a hard Matter to prevail with a Woman to own that ſhe loves you; but when ſhe hath once done it, ſhe hath no further Secret to keep from you.

may bring us into, it behoves us to reſolve (by Divine Aſſiſtance) that we will act in them all, as thoſe who are bought with a Price, and, therefore, no longer their own; and conſequently, bid adieu to all the empty Faſhions and falſe Gallantries of Life, correcting in ourſelves all Tendencies to Libertiniſm, and look upon ourſelves now as deſtined to ſober and reaſonable Pleaſures.

The due Obſervance of theſe two Points, will neceſſarily lead to a third, which can only be neglected ſo far as theſe are not attended to: [viz] to make Choice of ſuch a Partner for Life, as we have good Reaſon to believe is under the Influence of the ſame Principles (‡) and not to be miſled by the moſt plauſible Appearance to unite with any Perſon, in whom theſe Principles have not, in ſome Meaſure, taken-place. (*) Indeed, Nothing has more brought Medlook into Contempt and Prejudice, than the too frequent Examples of Levity and Wantonneſs, that have been the Stain of

(‡) Prudence teaches that Regard ſhould be paid, every if Circumſtances will duly admit of it, to a Uniformity of Sentiment and Practice in the Mode of profeſſing it, that every the leaſt Occaſion of Miſapprehenſion and Coolneſs from a Relation, wherein the moſt perfect Union is deſirable, may be precluded; which is moſt likely to be, when they "take ſweet Counſel together, and walk in the Houſe of God as Friends." If however, in ſome Caſes, this Advice cannot be complied with, good Senſe and good Nature, where (under) their

(*) See No. 33, of the Spectator.

every Age and Country. If a virtuous Diſpoſition be wanting on either Side, Eaſe and Felicity are baniſhed forever: Diſcontent and Jealouſy uſurp the Breaſt, and lord it over all the milder Affections. (*)

A Want of Care in this Matter, has filled many a pious Heart with Anguiſh through all the remaining Years of Life. For a truly religious Perſon to marry One who has no Reliſh for ſpiritual Things, is taking up a heavy Burden, which can never be ſet aſide. (‡) "Be ye not (ſays the Apoſtle) unequally yoked together with Unbelievers: for what Fellowſhip hath Righteouſneſs with Unrighteouſneſs? and what Communion hath Light with Darkneſs? and what Concord hath Chriſt with Belial? or what Part hath he that believeth with an Infidel?"

How greatly muſt the Worſhip of God in the Cloſet, and in the, &c. ☞ (Page 46.)

ſpecting the Circumſtances of Temper and Diſpoſition, and how far Prudence and Piety recommend the Alliance.

Hæredi ſunt tibi Mores. Diſparem vites.

(‡) When it depends entirely on ourſelves with whom we will ſpend our Days (a Happineſs which but very few can boaſt) we naturally attach ourſelves to thoſe, from whoſe imagined Worth we have Reaſon to expect the warmeſt Returns; but Experience convinces us how frequent and how fatal are the Errors of our Choice; we ſee thro' a Glaſs, which preſents Objects to us not only darkly, but alſo falſely. Some Qualities dazzle by a ſpecious Luſtre; Others allure us by a ſeeming Solidity; Gravity paſſes on us for Wiſdom, and

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theſe happy Qualities are joined with a religious Character, will know how to over-rule thoſe Inconveniences, which Difference of Opinion about leſſer Matters might otherwiſe be unavoidable. But certainly, the Apoſtolical Exhortation, to Chriſtians in general, to "be of one Accord, and of one Mind," may with peculiar Emphaſis be addreſſed to Chriſtians in the Conjugal Relation.

(*) *Si tibi Coetus non eſt, praeteribit* Pan *Diverſorium tuum.*

Women are to be meaſured, not by their Beauties, but by their Virtues—*Sat pulchra, quæ fat bona.*

"Favour is deceitful and Beauty is vain; but a Woman that feareth the Lord, ſhe ſhall be praiſed."

That Love alone, which Virtue's Laws controul
Deſerves Reception in the human Soul.

See No. 33, of the Spectator.

every Age and Country. If a virtuous Diſpoſition be wanting on either Side, Eaſe and Felicity are baniſhed forever: Diſcontent and Jealouſy uſurp the Breaſt, and lord it over all the milder Affections. (*)

(*) *Virtus, Virtus, inquam, conciliat Amicitias, et conſervat.*

Without Religion how can any Relation in Life be ſtiled deſirable? Morality, indeed, may make a Perſon ſober and honeſt, but real Chriſtianity alone confirms and ſecures Fidelity and good Temper to the End. Young Perſons, therefore, cannot be too circumſpect in fixing their Affections, and making Choice of Companions for Life. It is not ſufficient merely to love the Partener we wiſh to be united to, in Marriage; but it is alſo abſolutely neceſſary to enquire reſpecting the Circumſtances of Temper and Diſpoſition, and how far Prudence and Piety recommend the Alliance.

Notandi ſunt tibi Mores. Diſparem vites.

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the Cloſet, and in the Family, be interrupted, or diſtracted in ſuch a Caſe? How muſt the Improvement of Children and Domeſticks be hindered, and the Force of good Example leſſened? How muſt the real Chriſtian be wounded in his Soul, when deeply impreſſed with the Love of God ſhed abroad in his Heart, he would fain apply to the Perſon deareſt to him, to ſhare and to improve his Joys; or, when, under Diſtreſs or Temptation, he needs and earneſtly deſires the Aſſiſtance of her Counſel and Prayers, but in either Caſe can meet with no Return but Coldneſs, Surpriſe, and Miſapprehenſion! How muſt it add to his Grief, in a Time of Trouble, and damp his Pleaſure in his brighteſt Hours, to reflect on the dangerous Situation of One, whoſe Intereſt is dearer to him than his own Life; If divine Providence takes her from him in ſuch a State, how deep and bitter muſt his Mourning be; How hard will he find it to ſilence the Bodings of his Heart, and to reſign her into the Hands of that God

Vivacity for Wit; and we too often find, that, inſtead of an amiable Companion, and a prudent Counſeller, we have linked ourſelves to an idle Jeſter, or a concealed Villain. Here, indeed, Self-love commands, and Religion warrants a Retreat; If the Friend, on whom we relied, "ſtart aſide, like a broken Bow," we are at Liberty to leave, and ſeek a ſurer Defence. But the Caſe is far otherwiſe, when we are tied down by Connections, bound by ſolemn Obligations, by Nature and by Religion, to Duties we cannot ſhake off, or ſet light by.

God, to whom he fears she lived and died a Stranger! If he should be called first from her, with what Anguish must it probably fill his dying Hours, to think that their present Parting must, perhaps, be an eternal Separation? and that he leaves her in the midst of the Snares and Calamities of an evil World, without an Interest in those precious Promises, which he knows are alone able to support her! — A Union of Affection which either obviates or softens all other Trials, will in this Case, greatly heighten and aggravate the Distress. The more tenderly they love, the more sensibly they must grieve each other while together, and the more awful and overwhelming their Separation will prove.

How different is the Experience of those who are united in Grace as well as Affection! How are their Pleasures heightened, and their necessary Trials, by the Sense of their Redeemer's Love, alleviated; while their Prayers are enlivened, and their Praises multiplied upon each other's Account! Whoever departs first, can with Faith and Comfort commit the Survivor to the gracious Protection of their Heavenly Father: whoever remains longest here, has always the unspeakable Consolation to know that their dearest Companion is safely arrived at the Haven of eternal Rest; and that a few rolling Years will reunite them in a State of unchangeable Happiness, beyond the Power of Death, or

Sin, or Sorrow, to interrupt or embitter their Harmony forever. (*) — Where their Love, refined from every Dreg of earthly Impurity, and ſpiritualized by the conſtant Enjoyment of the Divine Preſence, will ſubſiſt and floriſh in immortal Life; when the tranſient Circumſtances whereon it was founded, and whereby it was maintained in this frail State, will perhaps, be no more deemed worthy Remembrance. — But further,

To Virtue, we muſt add Good-Nature, an agreeable Perſon, a good Underſtanding, and an eaſy Fortune.

Allowing Virtue the firſt Place, without which no other Perfection can be compleat, it is neceſſary that we conſult ſomething more than it, in the Diſpoſition of the Perſon we chuſe as Partner for Life. The Lamp of Affection will burn but very dim, when the Appetite is once cloyed; when the ſenſual Enjoyments are upon the Decay, and no Charms are ſeen to blow up the expiring Flame of Love, and rekindle the abating Affection. When we, therefore, chuſe our Companions for Life, if we hope to keep both them and ourſelves in good Humour to the laſt Stage of it, we muſt be exceeding careful in the Choice we make, as well as in the Conduct on our own Parts. — And,

Firſt, Natural-Temper. We give this the Precedence becauſe it hath a more immediate and direct Influence

(*) See the laſt Letter, in No. 204, of the Spectator; with No. 530.

fluence on the Happineſs of the Marriage State than either of the following. Good-nature is of Importance in all ſocial Connections, but more eſpecially in this. It faſtens and confirms the Union which *Love* & Friendſhip have created. It infuſes Sweetneſs into all the Intercourſes of this endearing Relation, alleviates the Cares and Troubles which attend the bringing up a Family, facilitates the various Duties of domeſtic Life. Whereas, the contrary Diſpoſition, eſpecially if it prevails in both Parties, draws after it the greateſt Inconveniencies and Miſeries, either frequent Contentions, or elſe Diſtance and Reſerve, and in the End confirmed Diſguſt and Hatred. This is a Point therefore to be conſulted with great Attention. How happy where each ſtrives to outvie the other in Sweetneſs of Temper and Gentleneſs of Manners! Theſe amiable Qualities are, however, leaſt to be diſpenſed-with on the Side of the Woman, ſince they are generally deemed congenial to that Sex, and the Want of them deprives them of moſt of their other Charms, and renders them incapable of properly diſcharging the Duties peculiar to their Department.

And here we ſhould not forget to obſerve, that Good-nature is the proper and immediate Attendant on Religion, which has a conſiderable Influence to correct, if not entirely cure, an acrimonious Temper;

for a Huſband, who having drank deep into the Spirit of it, how is it poſſible, though he were a Churl before, to be other than humane and kind! and for a Wife, however unhappy her natural Temper might be, not to become in a Degree ſoft and yielding! "The former will love his Wife even as himſelf, and the latter will ſee that ſhe reverence her Huſband."

As to EXTERNAL Accompliſhments, whether they are the Giſts of Nature, or the Fruits of Education, they make ſuch Impreſſion, and very properly too, upon the human Heart, as fail not, in Connection with Piety and Good-Nature, to unite the Affections by a Band that nothing but Death can diſſolve.

Yet, e're the Paſſions are captivated, the Maxim of the Wiſe Man ſhould be well conſidered; "Favour is deceitful, and Beauty is vain: but a Woman that feareth the Lord, ſhe ſhall be praiſed."

When each Party conceives a pleaſing Idea of the external Accompliſhments of each other, and, on the Grounds of correſpondent Affections, join Hands in this moſt intimate Relation, they have, as far as theſe Qualities will carry them, the moſt flattering Hopes of Happineſs which this State can afford them.

When the Perſons to whom we join ourſelves can ſtand an Examination, and bear the Scrutiny; — when they

they mend upon our Acquaintance with them, and diſcover new Beauties the more we ſearch into their Characters, our Love will naturally riſe in Proportion to their Perfection. The *Forma, fragile Bonum*, of the Poet, will never take off from the Value and Eſtimation of Beauty; there muſt be real or fancied Charms to engage the Heart; (*) and when Perſons have choſen well in this Regard, if they have either Senſe or Gratitude, they will not ſlight or contemn each other, becauſe Age or Accidents of Sickneſs have quenched the Fires that firſt inflamed them. They will rather look back, and revive Endearments from the Recollection of that Object, which was the Soul of their Deſire;

(*) A fair Face is half a Portion. *Quod pulchrum eſt, placet.*

The Power of Beauty is univerſally acknowledged, and almoſt irreſiſtible. It hath been the Object of Love and Admiration in all Times, and among all Nations. Amongſt ſome it has been the indiſpenſable Introduction to Poſts of the higheſt Truſt and Authority, and amongſt barbarous Nations Preſages of good or Ill-Fortune were drawn from the Beauty or Deformity of Perſons they accidentally met on their Journey to any Enterprize; nor can the moſt informed Perſons avoid paying Reſpect and Attention to all that comes from Perſons of a graceful Deportment and beautiful Form.

Beauty may be therefore termed Nature's Letters of Recommendation, and it has found its Favourites even in War, which is the Theatre of Blood and Death. — Beauty is a great Recommendation, and none that ever poſſeſſed it will ſpeak againſt it, for to give Pleaſure by our Preſence wherever we go, without the Trouble of Exertion, is a noble Privilege. Serm. CCCLXIV.

Deſire: they will view each other with a Tenderneſs that confeſſes their reciprocal Power, and regard each other as the Pride of their Choice, and the Ambition of their Wiſhes. The Rapture they once conceived from their Forms, will not loſe all their Force; but they will be fond of cheriſhing THAT which was once the Source of their Pleaſures.

Nor are the Beauties of the Face, the Advantages of Complexion, the Delicacies of Shape, and Attractions of Behaviour (*) the only things to be conſidered in an intended Partner; but only as ſo many adjunct Qualities to recommend to Love. If we would lay a Scheme for compleat Happineſs, let us look carefully into the Perfections of the Mind; let us examine the Underſtanding and Capacity, whether the former will come-up to the Management we require; and whether the latter is ſufficient to make them Friends, as well as Companions. (‡)

(*) See the 2d. Letter in No. 229, of the Spectator, On Delicacy of Behaviour.

(‡) *Melo Virum abſque Pecuniâ, quàm Pecuniâ abſque Viro.* He who has excellent Talents, with a moderate and an agreeable Perſon, is preferable to him who is only rich; if it were only, that good Faculties may purchaſe Riches, but Riches cannot purchaſe worthy Endowments. — "Marry thy Daughter, and ſo ſhalt thou have performed a weighty Matter; but give her to a Man of Underſtanding." See the 2ſt. Part of No. 437, of the Spectator.

The Reaſon why beautiful Women have ſeldom great Accompliſhments,

These, besides the Reputation of them, are of no small Importance to enable Persons in this Relation, to manage their Affairs with Advantage and Success. Indeed, there are some Occupations and Professions in Life which require more Knowledge, Ingenuity, and Acquaintance with the World than others. And the domestic Concerns of some Families are so circumstanced, as to render Prudence and Attention of greater Consequence than in other Families. But be our Rank and Station in Life what they may, good Sense, if properly used, will avail not a little to secure us from many Evils that could not be otherwise avoided, and to procure us many Comforts which would otherwise be foregone. Insomuch, that it hath been often observed of Sagacity on the Side of the Man, and Œconomy of the Woman, that they are of greater Account, at the setting out of Life, than a considerable Fortune already got to their Hands.

It should here also be further observed, that one grand End proposed by the conjugal Relation is, (as we have seen) the mutual Participation of intellectual Pleasures. But, without some good Degree of natural

(under) Un-

and Character; who, giving them the Preferance to mere Beauties, will in due Time marry them.

See Knox's Essays, No. 36, On the Want of personal Beauty, a frequent Cause of Virtue and Happiness—and also No. 33, of the Spectator.

Desire: they will view each other with a Tenderness that confesses their reciprocal Power, and regard each other as the Pride of their Choice, and the Ambition of their Wishes. The Rapture they once conceived from their Forms, will not lose all their Force; but they will be fond of cherishing THAT which was once the Source of their Pleasures.

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The Reason why beautiful Women have seldom great Accomplishments,

Understanding, this End is not to be attained. Indeed Multitudes have neither Ability nor Taste for Improvements in Knowledge; and it is very possible, such Ones, united in this Relation, may be susceptible of little Pain from Ignorance. But where the contrary is the Case, how much are the Joys of Life heightened and improved by frequent Intercourses on Subjects civil, moral, and religious! and what enlivening Pleasures are often felt from the Collision of masculine Sense on the one Side, with a brilliant Imagination on the other; especially where the former is free from overbearing Pedantry, and the latter from disgusting Affectation!

Not to say, likewise, what mighty Effect good Sense hath to restrain the natural Impetuosity of the Passions, and to regulate and soften the Manners of Persons, in this interesting Connection, towards each other. A Passion thus kindled in the Breast, from a Consideration of each other's Excellences, and Accomplishments, and good Understanding, will not languish and die away; it will rise into a steady, unextinguishable Flame, which the endearing Intercourses of virtuous Friendship will daily fan, and the most tempestuous Storms of worldly Adversity will not be able to put out. They will esteem each other's Characters as wise and good; their mutual Interests, civil and religious, will lie near their Heart, and to their Persons they will feel a firm and unalterable Attachment, and Partiality in their mutual Favour, will place each other in such a Light as to secure not only (under) their

pecially as such Instances are but seldom seen, owing chiefly to the Difficulty of attending to the Graces of the Mind, amidst the Cares of the Body, and the Flatteries of the World.

But the Majority of Mankind being not beautiful, and some of them deformed, it is a wise and benevolent Dispensation of Providence, that the Want of Beauty is often attended with great Benefits to Individuals and to Society.—Almost all the human Race are desirous of being respected, and if they have nothing external to recommend them, many will endeavour to compensate the Defect by the Acquisition of internal Excellencies, by Reading, Politeness, and Affability; and as Piety and Abilities contribute much more to promote Benefit than Beauty, therefore such plain People are more useful than those who are only handsome. Thus, sensible and good-natured, their Company will be sought by Men of Understanding and Character, who, giving them the Preference to mere Beauties, will in due Time marry them.

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their reciprocal Respect, but the Respect of all their Acquaintance. For, as "the Man is the Head of the Woman; so the Woman is the Glory of the Man."

There is so much Nicety and Discretion required to keep Love alive after Marriage, and to make Conversation still new and agreeable; that good Sense seems a very essential Aid, &c. &c. (under)

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It may happen that a beautiful Woman may possess a good Understanding, have had a good Education, and be of a very good Disposition. In this Case her Beauty will be doubly valuable, and especially as such Instances are but seldom seen, owing chiefly to the Difficulty of attending to the Graces of the Mind, amidst the Cares of the Body, and the Flatteries of the World.

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It may happen that a beautiful Woman may possess a good Understanding, have had a good Education, and be of a very good Disposition. In this Case her Beauty will be doubly valuable, and especially as such Instances are but seldom seen, owing chiefly to the Difficulty of attending to the Graces of the Mind, amidst the Cares of the Body, and the Flatteries of the World.

But the Majority of Mankind being not beautiful, and some of them deformed, it is a wise and benevolent Dispensation of Providence, that the Want of Beauty is often attended with great Benefits to Individuals and to Society.—Almost all the human Race are desirous of being respected, and if they have nothing external to recommend them; many will endeavour to compensate the Defect by the Acquisition of internal Excellencies, by Reading, Politeness, and Affability; and as Piety and Abilities contribute much more to publick Benefit than Beauty, therefore such plain People are more useful than those who are only handsome. Thus, sensible and good-natured, their Company will be sought by Men of Understanding and Character, who, giving them the Preference to mere Beauties, will in due Time marry them.

See Knox's Essays, No. 36, On the Want of personal Beauty, a frequent Cause of Virtue and Happiness—and also No. 33, of the Spectator.

nions: Paſſion is raiſed by ſuch Society, and gradually aſcends to more exalted Pleaſures than thoſe of Enjoyment. Life hangs heavily in the repeated Converſation of one, who has no Imagination to be fired at the ſeveral Occaſions and Objects which come before us, and who cannot ſtrike out of the Reflections, new Paths of pleaſing Diſcourſe. (*) If they have good Humour enough to make each other gay, and Wit enough to render that Gaiety agreeable, the Approbation of each others Words & Actions will be a continual new Feaſt to each other: nor can they enough applaud their good Fortune in having their Lives varied every Hour; their Minds improved by each other's Ideas, and their Hearts more glad for every Circumſtance they meet with: How does their Wit improve their Pleaſures, counſel them in Emergencies, and add Conſolation in the Moments of Affliction! – The mutual Paſſion, which is grounded on this ſolid Foundation, enters into the very Conſtitution, and the Kindneſs flows as eaſily and ſilently as the Blood in the Veins; ſuch Eſteem and Friendſhip in Love will produce in the End Content ſo abſolute, as to ſurpaſs Raptures, and Tranquility more worth than Extaſy.

But, when there is no good Senſe or Wiſdom to relieve and comfort againſt the Accidents of Life, the State

(*) *Cum bene te novi, jam mihi priſcus eris.*

State soon grows irksome and insipid: Contradiction and cross Purposes make up the greatest Part of the Matrimonial Conversation; and they contemn each other's Want of Relish; (*) and Sourness, and Debate, and Impertinence of Argument, are the Consequences of their Folly.

The Other Ingredient, so essential to the Happiness of the Marriage State, is an EASY Fortune. (†)

No Doubt it is contrary to all Ideas of Prudence and Humanity, for young People to enter into this Relation, without any reasonable Prospect of being able to provide for themselves and Families. A Step of this Sort has been often followed with very unhappy Consequences. On the contrary, to forbear forming the marriage Connection, purely because there is not such a Fortune on either Side as will enable a Man to support a Family independent of Business, is a Conduct very nearly as censurable as the former. For surely it is the Duty of every One who is rising into Life, to do something towards his own Subsistence and that of his Offspring, and not to depend entirely on the Industry

(under)

quadrare videntur.

(*) He that feeds upon Fancy, may be troubled in the Digestion.

(†) Beauty commands some, but Money all Men.

Facit omnia Nummus — Pecunia obediunt omnia.

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and Succeſs of thoſe who have gone before him. His own Intereſt, and that of Society in general, requires it: for ſlothful Inactivity is alike inimical to the One and the Other. But, in regulating our Views on this Matter, Regard is to be had to our Rank of Life, to the Kind of Education we have had, and to the Station we are to fill. And however an Equality of Circumſtances may in many Inſtances be properly regarded, yet doubtleſs there are Caſes wherein this Rule may with good Reaſon be diſpenſed with. Where there is Wealth on the one Side, there may be Conſiderations [illegible] be in a Circumſtance that can ſupport the Charge of this State, and upon juſt Grounds look forward to the Maintenance of a Family, before we determine to alter our Condition. We ſhould ſubdue, &c. (under) on a low and needy Fortune. The Conſequences are of that fatal Kind, that it is to be eſteemed a great Treſpaſs to betray an unthinking and deluded Perſon into

(*) *Ubi per Oſtium intrat Paupertas, per Fenſtras evaneſcit Amor.*
Sine Cerere et Bacchò frigit Venus.
Tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis.
Rerum Facies mutatur; et, quæ prius amabilis, omnia turpia in illam quadrare videntur.

He that feeds upon Fancy, may be troubled in the Digeſtion.

(‡) Beauty commands ſome, but Money all Men.
Facit omnia Nummus — Pecunia obediunt omnia.

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We ſhould ſubdue our Paſſion, rather than draw the Object of our Affection into Inconveniences, and make the Perſon, we ſeem to be fond of, a Slave to Neceſſity, and thoſe unnumbered Afflictions that wait on a low and needy Fortune. The Conſequences are of that fatal Kind, that it is to be eſteemed a great Treſpaſs to betray an unthinking and deluded Perſon into

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Sine Cerere et Baccho friget Venus.
Tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis.
Rerum Facies mutatur; et, quæ prius amabilis, omnia turpia in illam quadrare videntur.
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into ſo much Miſery. Jars and Diſlikes, Upbraidings and Contumely generally enſue on an ebbing Circumſtance. — Indeed,

When this is the Caſe, Marriage is viewed in its worſt Light; It is drawing an uneaſy Yoke, and being a Slave, without Hopes of Redemption; at leaſt, it is ſo with Regard to the more elegant Part of Mankind; the Poor often meet but with little more than ſufficient for the firſt Day, and riſe content the next Morning to labour mutually for a comfortable Subſiſtence; but we are ſpeaking of thoſe, who are born to Expectations above diurnal Labour, who have Reaſon to hope for a Life of Eaſe and Tranquility, and to taſte the Sweets of Plenty and Variety. — Indeed,

When People meet on Terms of Equality, when their Fortunes, on each Side, are ſufficient to make them happy, and then ſome unfriendly Accident reduces them, it is barbarous that a Coldneſs and Indifference ſhould grow between them, to aggravate their Unhappineſs; or, that they ſhould look on one another with leſs Indulgence and Affection, becauſe they are overtaken with a Calamity, which it is not in their Power to fence againſt: — They ſhould rather ſweeten and mitigate the Senſe of the Diſaſter with an Increaſe of Tenderneſs, and comfort themſelves in the Concurrence of Diſtreſs, that however Fortune may inſult them

them from without, ſhe cannot make them unhappy, while Love triumphs in their Breaſts, and ſecures them from Adverſity.

The only Remedy againſt a Decay of Paſſion on ſuch Trials, are a ſufficient Stock of Virtue, a well-grounded Love and Conſtancy of Soul, that cannot give way to Change. And, where ſuch a Conſtancy as this is wanting, the moſt inflamed Paſſion will fall away into Coldneſs and Indifference; and the moſt melting Tenderneſs degenerate into Hatred and Averſion.

Conſtancy is a Virtue natural to Perſons of even Tempers and uniform Diſpoſitions: and may be acquired by thoſe of the greateſt Fickleneſs, Violence and Paſſion; if they conſider ſeriouſly the Terms of Union upon which they come together, the mutual Intereſt in which they are engaged, with all the Motives that ought to excite their Tenderneſs and Compaſſion towards thoſe who have their Dependance upon them, and are embarked with them for Life in the ſame State of Happineſs or Miſery. And, when it grows in the Mind, upon Conſiderations of this Nature, it becomes a Moral Virtue, and a Kind of Good-nature that is not ſubject to any Change of Health, Age, Fortune, or any of thoſe Accidents which are apt to unſettle the beſt Diſpoſitions, that are founded rather in Conſtitu-

tion, than in Reaſon. In a Word, without a Degree of Conſtancy, there can be neither Love, Friendſhip, nor Virtue, in the World.

They who think themſelves fit for this State muſt ſet themſelves above being affected with Triſles, and ſuffer no Chance to impair their Kindneſs, nor leſſen their Eſteem for thoſe, who are to be their Life's Companions.

Sermon

SERMON CCCLXV.

On the same Subject.
Laws of it.

Heb. xiii. 4. "Marriage is honourable in all."

Of the Conjugal Alliance the following are the natural Laws.

First, mutual Fidelity to the Marriage-Bed. Disloyalty defeats the very End of Marriage, dissolves the natural Cement of the Relation, weakens the moral Tie, the chief Strength of which lies in the Reciprocation of Affection, and, by making the Offspring uncertain, diminishes the Care and Attachment necessary to their Education: It disturbs the Harmony of Life: what Confusions, what Quarrels, what Destruction of Circumstances, are occasioned by undecent Liberties in Wedlock? – The sacred Property of Marriage is infringed, and no Revenge can be too great for such an Injury.

Marriage should create a peculiar and incommunicable Friendship; these Rites are not to be invaded, nor the Quiet of either Party to be disturbed. Even those

Fa-

Familiarities which give Umbrage, and carry the Countenance of Deſign, are ill-natured and unjuſt, tho they go no further.

I will not be ſo partial to either Sex, as not to acknowledge that the Matrimonial Contract is MUTUAL; and a Failure on EITHER Side is equally a Violation of Faith, and a Breach of the Vow. The Man and the Woman are under the SAME Duties of Religion, and obliged by the SAME Laws of Sobriety. (*)

The Crime of Incontinence may admit of ſome Difference as to its Conſequences, and our Sex may ſin in this Way with leſs Fatality. But when a Woman proves perfidious, the Misfortune is incorporated with the Family; the adulterous Brood are palmed upon the Huſband, and grow up to the Inheritance of his Eſtate. Now, when the Man goes aſtray, the Wife cannot pretend to ſuch great Damages. But, may not the Aggravations on our Side amount very near to the ſame Injury? May not the Extravagance of a ſtrange Woman's Support, and Charge of educating her baſtard Progeny run out THAT Eſtate, which ſhould be the Inheritance of a lawful Iſſue, and be a Canker to the Fortune of a virtuous Wife, who deſerves, on many

(*) *Non Vivo Bene, quod Mulieri non licet: eadem a Viro, quæ ab Uxore debetur, Caſtimonia.* — Indeed, to give Women their Due, few of them are falſe, till their Huſbands provoke them to it.

many Accounts, more generous Treatment?

If we look into the Punishments which the Ancients inflicted on the Male for Incontinence, (*) we shall see there is no Exception on our Side, or Liberty entailed on us for offending. To mention but one Instance, the Law of Solon left the Malefactor perfectly at the Mercy of him that was injured.

When the Man is so unhappy as to be of a wandering Disposition, the injured Wife has but an uncomfortable Time of it; for, those who are Libertines abroad, are generally ill-natured at Home. The Wife is THEN esteemed a Nuisance; and no Ruggedness or Barbarity is too coarse for her. The Promises of Courtship, and the Engagements of Marriage are quite forgotten. The Title of Respect is transferred, and all the Breeding and Good-humour made over to the Stranger, who is made Governess of all, and riots in Curiosity and Expence; whilst, it may be, the Wife, who should, of right, be intitled to his Kindness and Liberality, can hardly procure Necessaries, much less the Conveniences and Comforts of Life. Nor are we to wonder at such Instances of Misbehaviour and coarse Treatment: for, He that can dispense with the main Articles, will easily get over the lesser Ones, and disregard the Points of Decency and good Manners.

The

(*) See No. 579, of the Spectator.

The Want of Civility may be eaſily excuſed in thoſe that break through the moſt ſolemn Engagements.

2dly, The ſecond natural Law of conjugal Alliance, is, Conſpiration of Counſels and Endeavours to promote the common Intereſt of the Family, and to educate their common Offspring. In Order to obſerve theſe Laws, it is neceſſary to cultivate both before and during the married State, the ſtricteſt Decency and Chaſtity of Manners, and a juſt Senſe of what becomes their reſpective Characters; without which, no One, engaged in this important State, can preſume upon any true ondaſting Happineſs. (*) The

(*) The Marriage Life is always either an *inſipid*, a *vexatious*, or an *happy* Condition. — The *firſt* is, when two Perſons of no Genius or Taſte for themſelves meet together upon ſuch a Settlement as has been thought proper by Parents or Guardians, from a Valuation of the Fortune of each; in this Caſe, the young Lady's Perſon or Accompliſhments are not conſidered, but ſhe goes with her Fortune, rather than her Fortune with her. Theſe having little or no Affection for each other, tho' they have Money enough, yet in general are not happy, but lead a ſtupid, uſeleſs Life, without Benevolence towards others, and without mutual Offices of Kindneſs to each other.

The *vexatious* Life ariſes chiefly from a Conjunction of many diſagreeable Circumſtances; ſometimes two Perſons are joined together of very different Ages, or of very different natural Tempers; this of Courſe (without mutual Forbearance) will cauſe great Animoſity and Diſputes, eſpecially if they are likewiſe poor and afflicted. Theſe Kind of Perſons reproach each other in private, and frequently expoſe each other in publick. The

The following practical Directions are of great Weight, First,

The *happy* Marriage is generally when two Perſons meet, and voluntarily make Choice of each other, without principally regarding or neglecting the Circumſtances of Fortune and Beauty; when they have known one another long enough before Matrimony to judge whether their Tempers may be made to agree, and when neither ſtrives for the Maſtery, but they divide the Superiority, and look over each others Infirmities.

It is almoſt impoſſible for any One to lay down abſolute Rules for Happineſs in this State, or to determine preciſely, in what Circumſtances this great Bleſſing is particularly lodged.

Two Perſons who have choſen each other out of all the Species, with Deſign, (as already obſerved, Page 40) to be each other's mutual Comfort and Entertainment, have, in that Action, bound themſelves to be good-natured, affable, diſcreet, forgiving, patient, and joyful, with Reſpect to each other's Frailties and Perfections, to the End of their Lives.

When this Union is ſtrictly preſerved, the moſt indifferent Circumſtance adminiſters Delight; but, if every little Occaſion of Diſguſt is to be viewed with an Eye of Impatience; if Peeviſhneſs and Spleen are to aggravate Imperfections, and the Weakneſſes of human Nature are to be conſidered as Crimes; Matrimony will ſoon loſe all its Felicity; its Enjoyments will be ſoured by rude Checks; Comforts will ſink into Diſtruſt and Sullenneſs; and Kindneſs and Connubial Careſſes be loſt in a Gloom and Degree of Averſion.

There is one particular Occaſion of unhappy Marriages, which, though very common, is not duly attended to, [viz] that Young Perſons, in the Time of Courtſhip, and in the firſt Entrance of Marriage, put on a Dreſs and Behaviour, which is to laſt no longer than till they are ſettled in the Poſſeſſion of their Partners. Scito

First, That, in Marriage, the chief Buſineſs be to acquire

Scitè et eleganter ſibi ipſis Veſtes aptant—Nihil videtur mundius, nec magis elegans: (nitidæ Veſtes pulchriorem reddunt.) Dum moliuntur, dum comuntur, Annus eſt. They reſign their Inclinations and Underſtandings to the Humours & Opinions of each other—They neither love nor hate, nor talk, nor think, in Contradiction to each other, but are controuled by a Nod, mortified by a Frown, and tranſported by a Smile. No Marvel if they are captivated by ſo much Suppleneſs and Complyance, and expect the ſame forever after.—In a little Time, they find they have each of them Wills of their own; and that One diſlikes what the Other approves; and that inſtead of treating each other like Beings of a ſuperior Order, as they at firſt thought, they ſcarce uſe each other with common Civility; their Dreſs and Perſons (which firſt caused Attention) are neglected, and their Manners changed, and conſequently become the Objects of mutual Diſlike. And, what makes the Misfortune worſe, is, we generally find the moſt abject Flatterers moſt to degenerate this Way.

Are theſe the Ways a Huſband's Love to gain?
Or won't it rather heighten his Diſdain?
Make him turn Sot, be troubleſome and ſad;
Or, if he's fiery, be choleric and mad.
Thus they their Peace induſtriouſly deſtroy,
And rob themſelves of all their promiſed Joy.

Indifference in the Married State will always be, ſooner or later, the Source of Miſery either to the Huſband or Wife, or both. Religion, therefore, or Virtue muſt be conſidered as of the *firſt* Importance, for without this there is no ſolid Foundation for laſting Peace and Comfort, and the nearer they agree in their Sentiments on Religion, the more happy they are likely to be.

Prudence in both (but eſpecially in the Wife) is the next requiſite, and more particularly, if the Circumſtances are ſmall, and the Family large.

Good-

acquire a Prepoſſeſſion in Favour of each other. They ſhould conſider one another's Words and Actions with a ſecret Indulgence; there ſhould be always an inward Fondneſs pleading for each other; ſuch as may add new Beauties to every thing that is excellent, give Charms to what is indifferent, and cover every thing that is defective. For Want of this kind Propenſity and Biaſs of Mind, the married Pair often take things ill of each other, which no one elſe would take notice of, in either of them. (*) It

Good-nature and mutual Forbearance, are alſo abſolutely neceſſary, and this not only occaſionally, but habitually. Theſe are, in ſhort, ſome of the moſt indiſpenſible Requiſites to be happy for a long Continuance after Marriage; and if they were properly attended to, could not fail to recommend the Marriage State to younger Perſons. But, inſtead of this, when we ſee the Avaricious and Crafty taking Companions for Life, without making Enquiries but after Land and Money, or the Thoughtleſs uniting themſelves for Life to thoſe whom they know very little of; — when Parents make Bargains for Children, and marry them without their full Conſent; — when Some marry for Heirs, in Revenge on their neareſt Relations; and Others throw themſelves into the Arms of thoſe whom they do not love, becauſe they have met with a former Diſappointment: when Some marry to get from under their Parents, and to have a Houſe of their own; when Some marry becauſe they are ſick of themſelves, or becauſe their Servants cheat them; when we think of theſe, and many more improper Motives or Cauſes of ſome entering into Matrimony, we do not wonder that ſo many are unhappy in the Married State.

(*) As in an unfortunate Marriage, the moſt minute and indif-

It is too commonly ſeen, that the ſmarteſt Pangs that we meet with, are in the Beginning of Wedlock; which proceed from Ignorance of each other's Humour, and Want of Prodence to make Allowances for a Change, from the moſt careful Reſpect, to the moſt unbounded Familiarity. — Hence it ariſes, that Trifles are commonly Occaſions of the greateſt Anxiety; and therefore, the firſt Maxim in the married Condition, is, to be above theſe.

When two Perſons have ſo good an Opinion of each other, as to come together for Life, they will not differ in Matters of Importance; becauſe they think of each other with Reſpect, in Regard to all things of Conſideration that may affect them, and are prepared for mutual Aſſiſtance and Relief in ſuch Occurrences; but, for leſs Occaſions, they have formed no Reſolutions, but leave their Minds unprepared.

Another Fault, too common in the matrimonial State, is, a Liberty of expoſing each other to Ridicule; the Huſband, with an inconſiderate Pride, triumphs in the Frailties of his weak Woman; whilſt ſhe, in Return, with as inconſiderate Zeal, expoſes the Faults of her

ſevant things are Objects of the ſharpeſt Reſentment; ſo, in a happy One, they are Occaſions of the moſt exquiſite Satisfaction: For, What does not oblige in One we love? What does not offend in One we diſlike?

her frail Man; each of them making it One of their top Diverſions to ſpread their Indiſcretions; little imagining, that the Condemnation of each other's Conduct, returns upon themſelves, and reproves them ſeverely, for having taken a Partner, the Subject of Contempt and Laughter.

It is certain, whatever domeſtick Conteſts they may have together, it is the higheſt Imprudence to impeach each other to the World; for, however Company may ſtrike in with the Complainant, and aggravate the Treſpaſs, they will laugh in their Minds at the Folly of the Publication, and think the Party aggrieved might take wiſer Methods. It is ſuitable to the Generoſity of Man's Nature to overlook the Frailties of the Weaker Veſſel, to make Allowances on her Side for unequal Education, and rather to throw her Errors into a Shade, than bring them out into a full Light; and, we may eſtabliſh it as a Maxim of equal Verity, that a prudent Wife will, by no Means, glorie in betraying the Defects of her Huſband. Secrets of Marriage ſhould be held ſacred, and their Sweet and Bitter be concealed with Prudence; for, the Errors of Wives reflect on Huſbands, and, when divulged, proclaim that we have choſen ill.

Be affectionate to thy Wife, then; for what is more ſweet and commendable than for the dear Conſort to

be obliging to her Husband, even till Age creeps on their Fondness: Or, for the Husband to accord to his Wife; and let no Dissentions arise between them to interrupt their Happiness?

It may likewise be of singular Use to carry an even Hand in our Conduct, to regulate our Tempers, and never give-way too far, either to Prejudice or Prepossession; never to indulge ourselves in Humours of Provocation, or descend below the Dignity of our Natures by too much Fondness: an Excess of this, as well as the Defect of natural Love may equally undo us: prudent Generosity is the only Method of making ourselves happy.

There is one Caution, which, if not observed, all other Rules will be ineffectual; It is a Rock on which Happiness is always split; by which Joys are extinguished, and Life itself made insupportable [viz] Jealousy: If we either consult our own Peace, or the World's good Opinion, we must not cherish a foul Suspicion of the Honour of our Partner. It is a Passion that grows insensibly, when encouraged; spreads through the whole Mass of Blood, and infects the animal Spirits; It is a foul and tainted Perspective, that spoils the Colour of every Object which we survey through it.

We cannot, indeed, assert against the Possibility of

a

a noble Jealouſy; but, doubtleſs, it muſt be founded on an Emulation in Love: — No One's Breaſt, if they truly love, can be ſo calm and lukewarm, as to be ſenſible their Paſſion is ſlighted, and yet feel it with Indifference: a generous Reſentment muſt ſpring from this Knowledge, and will terminate in Contempt and Averſion. Not that we are willingly to give-way to the Temptations of ſuch a Thought; but only particularly guard againſt yielding to thoſe raſh Suggeſtions, that our Love is not ſlighted, but injured. — Now,

Though it be almoſt impoſſible for jealous Perſons to be cured of their Suſpicions, (*) yet they will purſue the Shadow of a Doubt, believing it will lead them to Satisfaction; their Thoughts hang, at beſt, in a State of Doubtfulneſs and Uncertainty, and are never

(*) The Means moſt likely to cure or allay this evil Paſſion, are, Firſt, Let the ſuſpected Perſon be very prudent, and much upon his Guard, to avoid the other Perſon who is ſuſpected, and every Appearance of Evil with Reſpect to any Perſon who is likely to be ſuſpected.

2dly, The ſuſpected Perſon ſhould be very free in Converſation with the Partner in Life, and always be ready to diſcover or explain every Secret, however trifling or indifferent; This will, in Time, tend to remove the Prejudice.

3dly, The Perſon ſuſpected ſhould be remarkably kind and attentive to the Perſon who ſuſpects; This will greatly tend to ſubdue the Jealouſy; If this is continued uniformly, and for a long while, it will prove the Sincerity of the ſuſpected Perſon, and, moſt likely, totally eradicate the Suſpicion. Serm. CCCLXV.

never capable of receiving any Satisfaction on the advantageous Side; ſo that their Enquiries are moſt ſucceſsful, when they diſcover nothing; their Pleaſure ariſes from their Diſappointments, and their Life is ſpent in the Purſuit of a Secret which deſtroys their Happineſs, if they chance to find it. (*)

Whether it proceed, or not, from an Exceſs of Love, it is a Diſeaſe of ſo malignant a Nature that it converts all it takes into its own Nouriſhment. – a cool, or a fond Behaviour will adminiſter to its Increaſe; While the firſt is interpreted as a Symptom of Indifference, and the latter an Artifice of Diſſimulation. There is no Word or Geſture, ſo inſignificant, but it gives the Tormented new Hints, feeds Suſpicions, and furniſhes with freſh Matters of Diſcovery.

One would think, the Torments of this unreaſonable Diſquietude ſhould have a peculiar Prevalency on the Mind, to deter all from harbouring ſo uneaſy a Gueſt; a Quality that preys on Health, and corrodes our Quiet; palls our Appetite, and forbids our Repoſe, that holds no Correſpondence with Comfort or Gaiety, but is dead to Pleaſure, feeds on Diſcontent, and aſſociates with Perplexity.

If the Effects and Torments which this Paſſion brings along with it, are not ſufficient to ſecure us from its Attacks, it will be in vain to urge the Fatality of its

(*) See Vol. xiv. Page 178.

its Conſequences; the Expedients of Vengeance it puts People on, when once they have poſſeſſed themſelves of their Partner's Infidelity; when all the Fury of injured Love breaks looſe, and the whole Train of Affections ſettle into Reſentment, Averſion, and violent Reſolutions of Revenge.

Not that we are to be blind to notorious Indications of Wantonneſs (i.e) to be ſo partial to our Partner's Honour, as not to be ſenſible of a palpable Diſgrace; for, in this Caſe, Jealouſy is loſt in Proof, and the Certainty of being wronged, inſpires a juſt Indignation; but only that we are not to ſuſpect Incontinence, either upon no Grounds, or on trivial Circumſtances. It is the Advice of the Wiſe Man, "Be not jealous over the Wife of thy Boſom, and teach her not an evil Leſſon againſt thyſelf." The giving into Jealouſy too raſhly, implies a tacit Confeſſion of our own Want of Merit, and provokes the ſuſpected, either to turn the Charge upon us, or to aſſume a Liberty of deſerving our Cenſure. (*) — But further,

Next to the being free from ſuſpecting Levity in the Partner of our Life, we are to account it our Duty, to give no Room for the calling our own Conſtancy

(*) See further Arguments on this Subject, in No. 170, of the Spectator: with Rules how to behave under it, in No. 171.

ſtancy into Queſtion; we muſt not abuſe the good natured Virtue of others, and run into licentious Courſes ourſelves, becauſe we are ſecure of not being injured in the ſame Kind. This is a Diſhoneſty and Ingratitude unworthy of reaſonable Being, a Violation of That Promiſe made before God at the Altar, and voluntary branding ourſelves with Perjury and Falſehood. — But,

Laſtly, The Union muſt be inviolable, and for Life. (*) This is evident from our bleſſed Saviour's expreſs Words: "What God hath joined together, let no Man put aſunder." And therefore if Man cannot, muſt not put them aſunder, they muſt continue together, till it pleaſe God to part them by Death. And ſo far was God from intending to part them before, that he plainly intended they ſhould ſooner part with every thing elſe, even their neareſt and deareſt Friends. "For this Cauſe, ſhall a Man leave Father and Mother, and cleave to his Wife."

And indeed, if this Union were to continue only at the Diſcretion of either Party, or for any Term leſs than Life, the Evils that would be devolved upon Society (under)

(*) He will be a ſwift Witneſs againſt the Adulterers and Falſe Swearers, do not, for the Sake of thoſe Breakers of Wedlock, who become guilty of both theſe Sins at once, unite againſt this Nation to Judgment, and condemn it, becauſe of theſe Sins, whereof Men are ſo

of this Species of it, the Education of their Offspring, and so far from being ashamed, that they openly commit them in the sight of the Sun.

Marriage is now only a Commerce for Convenience, a Bargain struck up for Augmentation of Fortune, and so dependant on the Profit or Inclination of Friends, that the Parties brought together, are considered but at second Rate; and thus it becomes a State only previous to Separation and Alimony; a Deed of Trust, or a Suit at Commons, dissolves the Contract.

The Degeneracy of Morals has so far prevailed, of late Years, that Men blush at nothing more, than in being known to be Husbands, the Women as equally backward to be acknowledged as Wives; as if there were either Folly or Incontinence in the Confession. Should a Man be afraid to be seen with a Woman, who is not his Wife, or a Woman with a Man, who is not her Husband, we might reasonably allow it owing to their Modesty; were they loath to frequent the Company of such Persons, whose Reputations are not altogether untainted, we should not wonder.

But what impertinent Conceit can make them ashamed of each other? and blush to be seen in public with One whom they have chosen for an inseparable Companion? One, from whom they should expect all the Satisfaction and Delight which can be reaped from human Society? One, whom they love and esteem in private, and who is their chief Ornament at Home; and who, perhaps, credit each other no less by their Extraction, than by their Sense, Merit, and extraordinary Virtue? Why did they not blush at their Marriage first, than afterwards, when every Endearment should render them more connected. The Declaration of *Terence's* Lover is more directly suitable to the Mouth of a Husband.

——— ——— *Adjuro, nunquam eam me dimittere;*
Non si capiendus mihi sciam esse Inimicus omnis Homines.

Serm. CCCLXV. Hane

ciety, from such a Limitation, would be infinite; the great Engagement to Peace and mutual Love would be dissolved; all the Trust and Confidence of the perfectest Friendship would be entirely destroyed; the Assurance of Consolation in Distress, of Support in Sickness, and Society in Age, would be taken away from the Earth; and the Interests of Families would be broken. In short, the Evils of Life would be infinitely multiplied by it, and its greatest Blessings infinitely impaired. The Nature of Friendship, and particularly of this Species of it, &c. (Page 71)

(*) Marrying, formerly, was a serious Matter, and deserved a great Deal of Consideration. A Man was formerly to take his Wife "for better for worse;" the same House, the same Table, and same Bed, were in common to them both. They were to be Partners all their Life-time; there was no ending off with separate Maintenance; no reconciling a Wife and Family with the outward Appearance and Delights of a single Life.

Whereas now, To the Sins of our Fathers, this Age has added the giving up of Marriages, and the Parties allowing themselves that which no Religion nor Law can allow them, to live impudently in a Comfortship with other Persons, as if they were married to them; which is a Degree of Wickedness, that we have added to the former Measure of Iniquity, this which, without this, was Measure heaped up and running over. God grant it may not be the filling up the Measure of our Fathers; and that God who has threatened, "that He will be a swift Witness against the Adulterers and False Swearers," do not, for the Sake of those Breakers of Wedlock, who become guilty of both those Sins at once, arise against this Nation to Judgment, and condemn it, because of those Sins, whereof Men are

so

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——, —— *Adjuro, nunquam eam me dimittere;*
Non si capiendus mihi sciam esse inimicus omnis Hominem.
Eunuch. CCCLXV. *Horat.*

and the Order of Society, and of Succeſſions, which would otherwiſe be extremely perplexed, do all ſeem to require it.

To preſerve this Union, and render the Matrimonial State more harmonious and comfortable, a mutual Eſteem and Tenderneſs, a mutual Deference and Forbearance, a Communication of Advice, and Aſſiſtance and Authority are abſolutely neceſſary. If either Party keep within their proper Departments, there need be no Diſpute about Power or Superiority, and there will be none. They have no oppoſite nor ſeparate Intereſts, and therefore there can be no juſt Ground of Oppoſition of Conduct. — In a Word,

Of all the Pleaſures that endear human Life, there are none more worthy the Attention of a rational Creature, than thoſe that flow from mutual Returns of Conjugal Love. An happy Marriage has in it all the Pleaſures of Friendſhip, all the Enjoyments of Senſe and Reaſon, and indeed all the Sweets of Life; and to make it ſo, nothing more is required than Virtue, and Prudence, and Good-nature. When two Minds are thus engaged by the Ties of reciprocal Sincerity, each alternately receives and communicates Pleaſures that are

Hanc mihi expetivi, contigit: convenient Mores; valeant
Qui loter me Diſſidium volunt: hanc, niſi Mors,
Mi adimet Nemo. Tecum vivere amem, tecum obeam libens.

are inconceivable to all but those who are in this Situation; hence arises that Heart-ennobling Solicitude for one another's Welfare, that tender Sympathy which alleviates Affliction, and that participated Pleasure which heightens Prosperity and Joy itself.

To Conclude, "Beware, Young Man, beware the Allurements of Wantonness, (*) and let not the Harlot

(*) Women, it must be owned, are, in this Age, greatly their own Enemies. It is a just Complaint, that the Men are less sensible of their Beauty and Accomplishments than they ought to be. But, it must be remembered, that such is the Nature of Man, that he despises every Good which is too obvious, and too plentiful. "The Fruit that falls without shaking, is generally too mellow."

The Women have confessedly laid aside their Reserve; and the Men have, by a natural Consequence, suspended their Admiration. Ease, and Forwardness of Address, and excessive Familiarity, are established by the Law of Fashion; and Neglect and Contempt follow of Course, by the Law of Nature. Woman was designed to be pursued, not to pursue.

There is no Way, therefore, so effectual for the Cure of the Passion of Love, and all the Effects of it, when disorderly raised, as a Man's reflecting upon the Motives that produce it.

But, When the Passion proceeds from a Sense of any Virtue or Perfection in the Person beloved, it is, by no Means to be discouraged. *Te oriente Die, te decedente canebat.*

But if a Man considers that his heavy Complaints of Wounds and Deaths on its Account, rise only from some little Affectations of Coquetry, which are improved into Charms by his own fond Imaginations, the very laying before himself the Cause of his Distemper, may be sufficient to effect the Cure of it.

Harlot tempt thee to Excess in her Delights.

"The

Sunt pro Armis Mulieri, Meretrici verò imprimis, Lacryma. His Libertati Amantium insidiantur—His meliora cogitantes expugnant. Hæc Verba, Meherculè, sine falsâ Lacrymulâ, quàm Oculos istrendo misere, vix Vi expresserit, refringunt, ut te ultrò accusabis, et si dabis ultrò Supplicium. Juravi quoties rediturum ad Limina nunquam;
Cum bene juravi, Pes tamen ipse redit.
Ac veluti primò Taurus detrectat Aratra,
Mox venit assueto mollis ad Arva Jugo;
Sic primò Juvenes trepidant in Amore feroces,
Dò hinc domiti, post hæc, æqua et iniqua ferunt.

See No. 187, of the Spectator.

Falsa placent, audita placent, si non videare
Vera placent; nentrò, si videare, placent.

While, in the Dark, on thy soft Hand I hung,
And heard the tempting Syren in thy Tongue,
What Flames, what Darts, what Anguish I endur'd!
But, when the Candle enter'd, I was cured.

——— Dum Foris sunt, nihil videtur mundius,
Neque magis compositum quidquam, nec magis elegans;
Quæ, cum Amatore suo cùm cenant, lixuriant,
Harum videre Inluviem, Sordes, Inopiam,
Quàm inhonestæ sola sint Domi, atque avidæ Cibi,
Quæ Facie ex Fore, beluarum Pectus gerunt;
Noscas hæc omnia, Salus est Adolescentulo.

If we would take true Pains with ourselves to consider all things by the Light of Reason and Justice, tho' a Man were in the Height of Youth and amorous Inclinations, he would look upon a Coquet with the same Contempt and Indifference as he would upon a Coxcomb. The light Carriage in a Woman, would disappoint her of the Admiration she aims at; and the vain Dress or Discourse of a Man would

"The Madneſs of Deſire ſhall defeat its own Purſuit; from the Blindneſs of its Rage thou ſhalt ruſh upon Deſtruction. In the prime of thy Life, Old-age ſhall overtake thee; thy Sun ſhall decline in the Morning of thy Days. (*)

"But, when Virtue and Modeſty enlighten her Charms, the Luſtre of her Beauty is brighter than the Stars of Heaven; and the Influence of her Power it

is

would deſtroy the Comlineſs of his Shape, or the Goodneſs of his Underſtanding: for, it is no leſs common to ſee Men of Senſe commence Coxcombs, than beautiful Women become immodeſt. When this happens in either, the Favour we are naturally inclined to give to the good Qualities they have from Nature, ſhould abate in Proportion.

Nothing is ſo unaccountable as the Caprices of Women; for, it frequently happens, that the firſt Application of a new Face gains more upon them, than the long Services of an old One.

——— ——— *Varium et mutabile ſemper*
Femina. ——— ——— ———

Inconſtancy in us, is not an Argument of Levity, but of their Inſufficiency to pleaſe. Women complain of their Lover's Inconſtancy without Reaſon. Their Humours, their Faces, their Charms daily change: why ſhould Men be debarred the ſame Privilege.

Affectation renders the faireſt Face diſagreeable.

Captat ars placuiſſe artem.

See the viſionary Diſſection of a Coquet's Heart, in No. 281, of the Spectator. See alſo the 1ſt. Part of No. 238, On the Falſity of Men.

Non Pavor eſt utrique malus. Both fear alike.

(*) See Rebekah's Anxiety, in this Caſe, for her Son Jacob, Gen. xxvii. 46.

is in vain to reſiſt. "The Whiteneſs of her Boſom tranſcendeth the Lilly; her Smile is more delicious than a Garden of Roſes. The Innocence of her Eye is like that of the Turtle; Simplicity and Truth dwell in her Heart. The Kiſſes of her Mouth are ſweeter than Honey, the Perfumes of Arabia flow from her Lips. Shut not thy Boſom to the Tenderneſs of Love – the Purity of its Flame ſhall enoble thine Heart, and ſoften it to receive the faireſt Impreſſions.

"Give Ear, fair Daughter of Love, to the Inſtructions of Prudence, and let the Precepts of Truth ſink deep into thy Heart; ſo ſhall the Charms of thy Mind add Luſtre to the Elegance of thy Form; and thy Beauty, like the Roſe it reſembleth, ſhall retain its Sweetneſs when its Bloom is withered.

"In the Spring of thy Youth, in the Morning of thy Days, when the Eyes of Men gaze on thee with Delight, and Nature whiſpereth in thine Ear the Meaning of their Looks; Ah! hear with Caution their ſeducing Words; guard well thy Heart, and liſten not to their ſoft Perſuaſions.

"Remember thou art made Man's reaſonable Companion, not the Slave of his Paſſion; to aſſiſt him in the Toils of Life, to ſooth him with thy Tenderneſs, and to recompenſe his Care with ſoft Endearments."

Sermon

SERMON CCCLXX.

☞ (*)

Duty of Huſbands.

Coloſ. iii. 19. "Huſbands, love your Wives, and "be not bitter againſt them."

Having endeavoured, in the preceding Subject, to reſcue Marriage from the unbounded Freedom of licenſed Ridicule with which it is ſo familiarly and univerſally treated, and ſhewn the Lawfulneſs and Expediency of it; I come now to point out the ſeveral Parts of this reciprocal Duty, and to recommend thoſe Virtues which are more immediately neceſſary towards the due Performance of it.

Under the two leading and eſſential Points which are (in this, and the preceding Verſe) mentioned by the Apoſtle, we may fairly comprehend all thoſe Duties that are requiſite to make the Marriage-ſtate eaſy & happy. Submiſſion and Obedience in a Wife will naturally produce Humility, Prudence & Devotion: and Love and

(*) Four Sermons being ſeparately added to the Work ſince the laſt, are here allowed for.

and Affection in an Huſband will as conſtantly and invariably be attended with Tenderneſs and Affection; and wherever theſe unite, they cannot fail to conſtitute mutual and laſting Felicity. "Wives, ſubmit yourſelves to your own Huſbands, as it is fit in the Lord: Huſbands, love your Wives, and be not bitter againſt them."

My Endeavour from theſe Words ſhall be to point out wherein the Duty of a Huſband to his Wife principally conſiſts.

All Duties and Obligations to Love and Service of any Kind, ariſe either from the Senſe and Remembrance of Benefits and Favours paſt; or from the Hope and reaſonable Expectation of Benefits and Favours to come: – It is not eaſy, therefore, to ſee, how One Side can look for, or expect the Performance of any Duty from the Other, without diſcharging that of their own. — But yet,

This is the Caſe moſt commonly of That Side, that accounts itſelf, and is with Reaſon enough counted by others, the Superior. Thus Princes and Parents, Maſters and Governours, remember only the Grounds, the Reaſons and Commands that give them Power and Authority, and that exact Obedience, Love and Service to them, without remembring the Reaſon and Commands that oblidge them to diſcharge their ſeveral Obligations

ligations to their Subjects, Children and Servants, the very Ground and Reason of the Other's Obedience; and oftentimes dispense with themselves against both Reason and Command, and yet think it hard and unjust, that their Correlatives should at any Time relax in any of their Duties to them.

Thus it is too frequently with many Husbands, who are full of Dominion, morosely imperious, and sometimes cruel and tyrannical; ever remembring the Submission, Duty, Honour and Obedience that their Wives are bound by Reason and God's Command, to pay them; but seldom or never think of what they owe themselves to their Wives, by the same Reasons.

St. Paul here makes no Difference; but having said, "Wives, submit yourselves to your own Husbands, as it is fit in the Lord;" immediately adds, "Husbands, love your Wives, and be not bitter against them:" leaving it as much a Duty on Husbands to "love their Wives," as on the Wives to "submit themselves to their Husbands."

And indeed, It is so well & wisely ordered by God, that whosoever obeys his Commands, in discharging the Duties of his Relation, does thereby take the truest Way to the receiving what is due to him from the other. (*) The readiest Way for Husbands to have good Wives,

(*) *Bonus Dux bonum reddit Comitem.* Serm. 370.

Wives, affectionate, obedient, faithful, and loving, is to "love them, and not be bitter against them." Indeed, the Husband first promises to LOVE his Wife, before she promises to OBEY him: (*) and consequently, as his Love is the Condition of her Obedience, he must blame himself for her After-disobedience, if he hath withdrawn his Love from her. And,

Under the general Term of Love, we may, I think, comprehend the following, as necessary Branches and Expressions of this important Duty, [viz] Regard and Affection, Constancy and Fidelity, Tenderness and Delicacy, Prudence and Discretion, Good-nature and Indulgence, Care and Protection, Industry and Sobriety, Piety and Virtue.

Love is the great Corner-stone on which always must be raised the Foundation of domestic Happiness. (‡) It

(*) See this expressed in the Office of Matrimony.

(‡) Where an absurd Education does not make their Vanity preponderate, Love will ever prove the ruling Passion in a Woman's Breast; it will tincture all her Thoughts, and give a Bias to every Part of her Conduct; nor is this her Crime, but her Virtue and her Felicity, the Order of Providence, and the wise Destination of Nature.

The great Secret of Life, then, is to find a proper Object for that Passion. The Husband must himself be the Lover, if he means to be beloved. By the Constancy of his own Conduct he must inspire his Wife with true Notions of Happiness; that is, with Sentiments

It adorns all Relations, but here eſpecially, as being the Ground on which we firſt enter into this State, and by which alone the true Ends of it can be preſerved. And tho' the Want of it will not deſtroy the Band of Marriage, yet it deſtroys the Comforts of the married State. To form this Attatchment, therefore, it is firſt and above all things neceſſary, that a particular Affection be contracted towards the Perſon. This

ments of true Virtue and Religion; and thus he may preſerve inviolate, in the higheſt Senſe, the excluſive Property to which he is intitled. — But,

There is a great Difference between a manly rational Love, and a paſſionate Fondneſs.

The Eſteem which Women of Sentiment uſually have for Men, riſes or falls, in Proportion to the Opinion they have of their Wiſdom; but the effeminate Servilities of a doting Fondneſs bid fair to bring on that Satiety or Contempt which he is moſt ſollicitous to prevent. However ſtrong the Paſſion of Sovereignty may be in the Breaſts of ſome Women, the Man who renounces his Superiority, will, for that Reaſon, become an Object of her Contempt. A maſculine Tenderneſs, and Politeneſs of Manners, are the beſt Means of tying the Bands of Wedlock, and making them graceful, honourable, and productive of ſolid Happineſs; towards Women of diſtinguiſhed Beauty, becauſe they are moſt in Danger, and always think themſelves moſt entitled to Regard; to her who is not beautiful, becauſe this Diſtinction (if ſhe has any Ingenuouſneſs of Nature) will inſpire her Heart with a reciprocal Love; and, as it muſt flatter her Opinion of her own Merit, will give a Proof of the Taſte and Underſtanding of her Huſband. — Thus, in either Caſe, he will receive the ſtrongeſt Security of her Fidelity, and the beſt Earneſt of a mutual Felicity. Serm. CCCLXX.

This is so essentially necessary to the making of Marriage easy and happy, that nothing else can do it. (*) – Religion, Discretion, and good Qualities, Birth, Education and Estate, are all to be considered, in their several Measures and Degrees, to make a Marriage lastingly happy; yet neither Honour, nor Respect, nor Esteem can make Wives happy, but a Tenderness of Affection, which they had rather have; (‡) without which the rest are mere Formality, a Sacrifice without a Heart, and mere Hypocrisy towards them.

Not that I would by this be understood to recommend a Face or Shape, or Mein, or Figure; or to say, that no Man ought to marry without Form or Beauty: but only, that every Man ought to fix upon something or other that will recommend the Person to his Liking and Affection; and without which he will never make his Partner happy, nor himself; which he is certainly obliged to do, as much as in him lies.

God hath not bound Men to reason strictly in these Matters,

(*) The Peace of the Mind is certainly to be preferred to all other Considerations whatever, as being the End of all the Labours and Pursuits of Life. Now this a Man can hardly have, that is not easy at his own Home; and that a Man can never be, who lives in the constant View of an unacceptable Object, and converses with One, whom he hates or despises. — He that marries a Woman he never loved, will probably love a Woman he never married.

(‡) *Molle meum levibus Cor est violabile Telis.*

Matters, nor required them to ſhew an unerring, ſound Judgment in their Choices; theſe Affections are under the Dominion of the Fancy, and the Choice is innocently governed and directed by Imagination; (*) and the gracious Providence of God hath ſo ordained, that the Opinions and Taſtes of Men, with Regard to outward Forms, ſhould be as various as the Forms themſelves. (‡) What ſtrikes One with the Idea of Beauty, may ſhock another by an Appearance of Deformity. Thus doth Imagination, in this Caſe, ſupply the Place of Truth and Reaſon, and even the Deception of our Senſes contributes to the Enjoyment of them. The ſame beneficent Power which produced Order out of Chaos, and which commands the jarring Elements to bring forth Harmony, hath alſo from the various Inclinations of different Minds, and the wayward Deciſions

ons

(*) *Non amo te Sabidi, nec poſſum dicere quare;*
Hoc tantùm poſſum dicere, Non amo te.
Die amo, ſe diligo, nec dico quare diligo.
Cæcus Amor ſparsit, cæcus et ipſe ſavet.

(‡) *Quot Homines, tot Sententiæ. Suus cuique Mos.*
Inceptæ Uxoris eſt Electio; deformis facilè faſtiditur; formoſa difficilè cuſtoditur; et inter Formam Corporis atque Animi Caſtitatem Lis propè perpetua eſt. Rara eſt Concordia Formæ atque Pudicitiæ Fair Faces have ſometimes foul Conditions. A fair Face often hides a foul Heart. *Cui adſit Uxor formoſa, Venenum dulce, Compedes aureas, et ſplendidam habet Servitutem.* Sorm. CDCLXX.

ons of arbitrary Fancy, contrived to promote the general and universal Happiness. (*)

It must be confessed, that, in the Choice of many, too great a Regard is paid to external Appearances; the Lustre of Beauty is apt to dazzle, and the Sprightliness of Wit, to betray. Men, for the most part, build the Structure of domestick Happiness on a weak and tottering Foundation, when the Pillars, which are to support it, must of Course moulder and decay. Lasting Materials should doubtless be sought for, where lasting Happiness is proposed, Qualities and Perfections, not glaring, but useful; not shining, but solid, such as are calculated not merely to adorn and beautify, but to strengthen and enrich the Edifice. (‡)

A partial and strong Attatchment, therefore, to the Form

(*) *Quis non invenit Turbâ quod amaret in illâ?*
Invenies alium, si te fastidit Alexis.

Love sees Excellencies in the Object beloved, which no One else perhaps can perceive: It magnifies all the good Properties, and is blind to the Imperfections of it. To obtain the beloved Object, Love will lay the deepest Schemes, encounter the worst Dangers, and surmount the greatest Obstacles. It is of such Power in its Operations, that it hath often taken the Diadem from Kings, and made them stoop to those of mean Birth and Fortune. It has wrested the Sword out of the Hand of the Conqueror, and made him stoop as a Captive to his own Slave; and it has such a Variety of Snares to entangle the most wary, that few have escaped them.

(‡) See the Note, Page 60, &c. in this Vol.

Form and Manners, an affectionate Eſteem of the Qualities and Diſpoſition of the Woman is abſolutely and indiſpenſibly neceſſary to conjugal Felicity. Both Parties, therefore, have in this Point an indiſputable Right to judge for themſelves, and where they do not, we find by conſtant Experience, there is no laſting Felicity. Religion, Virtue and Diſcretion, with many other good Qualities are loſt and inſignificant, where the Affection of Perſon does not recommend and ſet them off: ſometimes they are not ſeen at all, nor any Complacency taken in them, where the Party that exerciſes them is not acceptable, or finds no Favour in the other's Eyes – Inſomuch, that many Men are counted happy, and might indeed be ſo, in the good Qualities, and Virtue, and Diſcretion of their Partners, who yet are otherwiſe, for Want of this Affection of the Heart; which will ſupply many Defects, and make Amends for many Failings, which will cover many Faults, and make Family-Inconveniences lighter.

It is a vain thing for any Man, therefore, to marry with Hopes of being happy and at Eaſe himſelf, or making his Partner ſo, without a Liking in this Reſpect. (*) They, therefore, who look upon this Matter as religious, and intend to lead a virtuous and ſober Life,

(*). Love is generally accompanied with Goodwill in the Young, Intereſt in the Middle-aged, and a Paſſion too groſs to name in the Old.

Life, will never suffer any, or all the Considerations in the World, to induce them to marry, where there is any Sort of Aversion, or great Indifference to a Person, or where at least there is no great Probability of loving.

The contracting of Children, therefore, young and uncapable of knowing what themselves or their Partners are, or shall be, and setting the Years of Consent very forward to each Party, whatever other good Ends it may serve, (*) yet it is certainly of evil Consequence with

(*) The End, most commonly aimed at in these Matters, is the securing an Estate and Fortune; but it were better, generally, if let alone; because the attaining of that End is not the principal and best Design of Marriage; but something only in Order to it. It will make those who are already at Ease, much easier; but it will not give Agreement, Union of Affection, Ease, and Satisfaction of Mind, which is to be the Foundation of every Man's Happiness. Upon this Account it is also probable, that so many People of great Degree and Rank are made miserable, more miserable than their Inferiors, by their imprudent Choices. Respect is generally had to nothing but Birth and Quality, to Fortune and Alliance, without Regard to Person, Shape, or Figure, to Virtue and good Qualities, and other Endowments, proper to engage and hold the Affections; and hence they become splendidly and exemplarily unhappy; as if it were the Sport of Fortune to level all Mankind; and by some odd Disaster, or their own Folly, to reduce the greatest People to an Equality of Misery and Trouble with their Inferiors; that all the World might be alike happy, all things considered and compared together. See the first Part of No. 437, of the Spectator. Lycurgus

with Reſpect to the Peace and Happineſs of the ſucceeding Life, if Love and mutual Liking ſhould not follow.

Parents have, undoubtedly, a great Authority in theſe Affairs: — but no One has Authority enough to make an innocent Party miſerable; and if a Parent had, he would ſurely forego it.

And therefore, it is not good to be over-rigorous, where it may reaſonably be thought the Children's Refuſal proceeds from ſome unaccountable Diſguſt, or an

Lycurgus *Lege caviſſet, ut ſine Dote Virgines ducerentur*, (ſee No. 511, of the Spectator) *at neque propter* Inopiam *alias relinquerentur inupta, nec ob Divitias expeterentur; ſed ut Juvenum quiſque ad Puellæ Mores reſpiciens, ex Virtute faceret Electionem.*

Cleobolus *æqualem Uxorem ducendam eſſe fundebat; Si enim ex ſuperiori Familiâ duxeris, non Affines tibi, ſed Dominos comparabis.*

Prodiga non ſentit pereuntem Femina Cenſum,
At velut exhauſtâ redivivus pullulet Arcâ
Nummus, et è pleno ſemper tollatur Acervo,
Non unquam vereor quanti ſibi Gaudia conſtent.

——— Woman-kind never know a Mean,
Down to the Dregs their ſinking Fortunes drain,
Hourly they give, and ſpend, and waſte, and wear,
And think no Pleaſure can be bought too dear.

(See No. 193. of the Spectator, with No. 299.)

He that marries for Riches is diſagreeably diſappointed, if he meets a good Wife; but that unexpected Happineſs is ſeldom his Lot. See the Note, Page 36. He that gets a good Huſband for his Daughter, hath gained a Son; and he who meets with a bad one, hath loſt a Daughter. Term. CCCLXX.

an incurable Aversion. The Parent may consider, that, in such a Case, the Obedience and Complyance of a Child, may make her much more miserable, than Disobedience and Refusal would make her faulty; but, when a Man is at Liberty, and under no Constraint, for him to marry without Love, is inexcusable.

And, having first loved, it is every Man's Duty afterwards to take every proper Course to confirm and strengthen his Affection, and to avoid all Manner of Occasions as may wear it out, or weaken it: because where personal Affection is wanting toward the Wife, the Husband will be in great Danger of not continuing true and faithful to his Vows, nor of performing any other of the Duties yet to be considered, and in which the Love of Husbands is required to shew itself.

Mutual Fidelity is so essentially necessary in Marriage, that the Breach and Violation of it, succeeding notoriously, (*) does not only dissolve the most religious Contracts, and most solemn Promises of Marriage, and

(*) The Transgression that succeeds and follows, not That which goes before the Contract, is to be regarded: there is no Retrospect to be had, no looking back to Offences committed heretofore. The greatest Guilt of that Kind possible dissolves no following Obligation, because the Offence must have Relation to the Party contracted with, who is hereby supposed to be extremely injured and abused: and therefore Regard is only to be had to those Offences that do Violence to such Contract; which can be only such as follow it.

and ſet the innocent Party at full Liberty, but it diſſolves the Marriage-Band itſelf immediately before God. — And yet,

How many amongſt us are unpardonably careleſs and guilty in this important Article!

Infidelity, on the Part of the Huſband, is, indeed, grown ſo univerſal, that its oppoſite Virtue is almoſt out of Countenance; is treated as venial by one Sex, and ſubmitted to as unavoidable by the other; but let thoſe who thus miſerably deceive themſelves, remember, that the ſame ſolemn Contract hath engaged both; and if there be ſome Difference betwixt the Offence of one Party, and of the other, with reſpect to Reputation, and the Confuſion of Families, it is not what concerns the Conſcience. If the Huſband neglects the Obligation, and ſpurns at the Command — it is not the injured Wife alone, who will reſent the Infringement: good Men will conſider it as an Outrage againſt Virtue here; and God will aſſuredly puniſh it as ſuch hereafter. (*) Not

(*) Altho' vicious Liberties are commonly regarded as leſs criminal on the Side of the Man, yet in Reality, and in the Sight of God, it is not ſo; becauſe the Obligation to Fidelity is equal on both Sides. And therefore the ſame Apoſtle that tells us (1 Cor. vii. 4.) that "the Wife hath not Power over her own Body, but the Huſband;" tells us alſo in the ſame Place, that "the Huſband likewiſe hath not Power over his own Body, but the Wife." It is true,

Not that we would be thought to confine theſe Reflections to the open and notorious; for the moſt concealed and ſecret Violations of the Marriage-faith, are alſo, in Effect, unkind; and alienate inſenſibly, and by Degrees, the Hearts and Affections of Huſbands from their Wives; for the virtuous declines as faſt as the diſorderly Affection gains-ground. (*) It ends, at beſt, in formal cold Civilities, but more commonly in Hatred and Averſion, in Quarrels and Conteſt, nay and ſometimes in tragical Events: for it is a vain Miſtake for any Huſband to think he ſhall live eaſily with his Partner, be her Affection ever ſo ſtrong to him, whilſt he is cold to her in this Particular. "A Man that breaketh Wedlock, ſaying thus in his Heart, who ſeeth me?

The Reputation of Families is more concerned in the Chaſtity of the Wife; but, on the other Hand, the Intereſt and Well-being of Families is, for the moſt Part, more concerned in the Chaſtity of the Huſband; becauſe he hath it more in his Power (generally ſpeaking) to deſtroy the Fortune of the Family by vicious Extravagance in this Point than the Woman. And therefore, however Men may be indulged in Corruptions of this Kind, from the Liberties of a looſer Education, and from the worſt Title in the World, the Privilege of a long Practice in Sin; perhaps too from the Partiality of human Laws; yet are they, both from the Law of Nature, and the Law of God, under equal Ties of Fidelity with the Wife, and under equal Guilt from the Violation of it. See Page 57, &c. of this Vol.

(*) When Men give-way to new Engagements, it is but reaſonable to conclude, the old One is wearing out.

me? I am compaſſed about with Darkneſs, the Walls cover me, and no Body ſeeth me; what need I to fear? The Moſt High will not remember my Sins. Such a Man only feareth the Eyes of Men, and knoweth not that the Eyes of the Lord are ten thouſand Times brighter than the Sun, beholding all the Ways of Men, and conſidering the moſt ſecret Parts. He knew all things e'er ever they were created; ſo alſo after they were perfected, he looked upon them all. This Man ſhall be puniſhed in the Streets of the City, and where he ſuſpecteth not, he ſhall be taken."

To Affection and Fidelity the good Huſband muſt alſo add Tenderneſs and Delicacy.

It is the Good-nature and Complacency of the Hoſt, which makes the Pleaſure of the Conqueſt; and in the Manner of conferring a Favour, there is almoſt as much Merit as in the Favour itſelf. The Huſband, therefore, is to conſider NOT HOW MUCH, but TO WHOM he gives; not WHAT he ſpeaks only, but TO WHOM it is ſpoken: in his Behaviour to his Wife, the Heart muſt ſeem to follow the Hand, and the Mind to direct the Tongue; he ſhould ſuit that Delicacy which he would oblidge, and imitate that Elegance which he would pleaſe. (*) To a Wife, mere Civility is Coldneſs; and

(*) The Authority which a Huſband has over his Wife ſhould

and mere Complisance, Indifference; to her a more expressive Kindness should add a Grace to every Word, and a peculiar Tenderness diffuse itself over every Action. It is, indeed, this Behaviour alone, which can soften and temper the Roughness of Masculine Severity, and give a Polish to the Manners of one half of Mankind; it is this tender Commerce, and this delicate Connection, which throws a Lustre over the Conversation of the civilized World, and constitutes, in a great Measure, the most elegant and refined Pleasures of human Life. — Again,

To Love, Fidelity and Tenderness, the Husband will likewise add, Prudence and Discretion.

A Husband must manage his Authority with Prudence, not with Rigour and Violence; the best Way to preserve his Authority is, by Discretion, Sobriety, and an exemplary good Life; this will produce a reverent Esteem and Veneration from the Wife and Family; but a humourfome Lightness or Severity will

not be like that of a Master over his Substance, but like that of the Mind over the Body, by sympathizing with her, and in Benevolence possessing one common Nature with her.

Respect and Honour is due unto the Wife, as being the weaker Vessel; a Husband is not to be observant of her Humour, for that will dishonour him; nor is she to be a Slave to him, for that would dishonour her; but she ought to be treated as a kind and dear Companion.

will expoſe Men to the Contempt of both. He that will not reverence himſelf, will not be revered by others.; but where there is a Mixture of Prudence and Purity, theſe will make a Man truly awful, and induce the Wife and Family to eſteem and imitate him.

Half the Miſeries and Diſquietudes, half the Interruptions of conjugal Peace and domeſtic Felicity, ariſe from Deſires too ardent, and Hopes too ſanguine. Both Parties, at their firſt Entrance into the nuptial State, eſpecially in Youth, are apt to form to themſelves Ideas, very inadequate and diſproportioned to the Condition of human Life. (*) It

(*) It is one of the greateſt Faults of too juvenile a Paſſion, that the Miſtreſs is more adored than loved, and rather worſhipped as an Idol, than courted as a mortal Beauty. *Inceptis eſt amentia, haud amantis.* She is accoſted in a Language proper only to the Deity; "Life and Death are in her Power; the Joys of Heaven and Pains of Hell, are at her Diſpoſal; Paradiſe is in her Arms; and Eternity in every Moment that you are preſent with her; Raptures, Tranſports, and Extaſies," are the Reward ſhe confers; Sighs and Tears, Prayers and broken Hearts are the Offerings which are paid to her; her Smiles make Men happy, and her Frowns drive them to Deſpair. Women are pleaſed with lofty Courtſhip, and the moſt diſdainful cannot but be complaiſant to thoſe who ſo highly flatter them. Now, it is certain, that he who is the Cauſe, ought not to murmur at the Effects. He who makes his own Miſery, hath no Right to complain of it. What ſhall we ſay, then, if the Weeds which over-run the Garden, are not only planted, but cultivated alſo by our own Hands? See No. 479, of the Spectator. Plut. Serm. CCCLXII.

It is true, at the Beginning of the Voyage, the Sky is

Flattery, too lavishly bestowed, will naturally produce Pride; and Pride enflamed and encouraged, will as naturally beget Luxury and Extravagance.

Is it not most absurd, then, to be surprized that the Idol expects Worship, when Men have taken so much Pains to raise it? or, that when they have been at so much Expence to feed a Vice, they should be astonished at the Size and Increase of it?

The Truth is, by this Means, we too often raise our Imaginations to what is not to be expected in human Life: and because we did not beforehand think of the Creature we were enamoured of, as subject to Dishonour, Age, Sickness, Impatience, or Sullenness; but altogether considered her as the Object of Joy, human Nature is often imputed to her, as her particular Defect. Whereas, we should consider things in their right Light, and as Nature has formed them, and not as our own Fancies and Appetites would have them.

In Fact, Women are neither those Angels nor Furies, as they are but too often represented; for, bating Propagation, they differ but little from the Men. — *Sola Uxor non aut displicent, quàm ducatur; si iracunda, si fatua, si deformis, si superba, si fœtida, quodcunque Vitii est, post Nuptias discimus.* — Women are seldom cheated, but they are accessary to it; did they not flatter themselves, Men could not so easily impose upon them. The more beautiful a Lady is, the more cautious and circumspect should she be; for Beauty is as great a Snare as Riches, and requires as much Care, Prudence, and Discretion to manage it aright. A handsome Woman, tho she cannot but know she is so, should yet make it her constant Study to behave as if she was ignorant of it; and allow no Freedoms to be taken with her, but such as are agreeable to Virtue, Modesty, and good Manners. *Nusquàm tuta Fides.* Honour is no where safe. A modest Reservedness is a Woman's chief Ornament, and best Defence against the imprudent Freedoms of designing Men.

is generally clear, and the Waters calm and unruffled, but to conclude from thence, that we are to ſail thro Life without Storm or Tempeſt, that neither Sickneſs nor Misfortune ſhall aſſail us; but that we ſhall enjoy nothing leſs than uninterrupted Health, conſtant Succeſs, with invariable Harmony and Affection, is, to the laſt Degree, abſurd and unreaſonable. It is the Duty and Intereſt of Both, therefore, and eſpecially of Him who ſits at the Helm, to prepare againſt the worſt, to ſteer the Veſſel with all poſſible Care and Diligence, and to conduct it ſafely into Harbour of Peace and Felicity.

Sermon

SERMON CCCLXXI.

On the ſame Subject.
Duties, continued.

Coloſ. iii. 19. "Huſbands, love your Wives, and "be not bitter againſt them."

The Particulars we have already conſidered in Reference to the Duty of Huſbands, were Love, Fidelity, Tenderneſs, and Prudence: – The next general Point is Good-Nature and Indulgence, which are eſpecially needful. (*) The Huſband is to be tender and mild to his Wife, and not torment her by provoking Words or Actions. If the Wife carefully performs her Duty, ſhe ought to be treated with Love and Kindneſs, to receive Praiſe and Commendation. Her Failings ſhould be rebuked with Meekneſs, in private, and ſo as to diſcover more of Sorrow than Anger. Perpetual Quarrels

(*) A proper Rule to be obſerved in all Occurrences of Life, but more eſpecially in the Domeſtic, or Matrimonial Part of it, is, to preſerve always a Diſpoſition to be pleaſed.

Non bene conveniunt, nec in unâ Sede morantur
Majeſtas et Amor. ——— ———

See No. 236, of the Spectator.

rels embitter the Comforts of Life, and hinder each from performing their reſpective Duties. Where Contention between Man and Wife reigns, Buſineſs is neglected, and Ruin enſues: and nothing is regarded but how to animate and provoke each other.

In a World ſo full of Miſeries and Misfortunes, Errors and Inadvertences, and of Paſſions and Follies, Differences both in Opinion and Practice muſt ariſe, where the Connection is ſo cloſe and intimate; (*) if Men will not conſider the Imperfections of human Nature, nor remember their own Miſtakes, but will make ill-natured Reflections on the Weakneſſes of their Partners, and make them Topicks of Upbraiding and Revilings, there will be no Love nor mutual Kindneſs;

(*) He who takes a Partner to himſelf with no other Conſideration than the Expectation of Scenes of Dalliance, and Thoughts of her only as ſhe is to adminiſter to the Gratification of Deſire, as that Deſire ſtags, will, without her Fault, think her Charms, and her Merit abated; from hence muſt follow Indifference, Diſlike, Peeviſhneſs, and Rage. But the Man who brings his Reaſon to ſupport his Paſſion, and beholds what he loves as liable to all the Calamities of human Life both in Body and Mind, and even at the beſt what muſt bring upon him new Cares and new Relations; ſuch a Lover will form himſelf accordingly, and adapt his Mind to the Nature of his Circumſtances. This latter Perſon will be prepared to be a Father, a Friend, an Advocate, a Steward for People yet unborn, and has proper Affections ready for every Incident in the Marriage-ſtate. Serm. CCCLXXI.

Kindness; – if there be not a Readiness to make the kindest Construction of each others Actions, the conjugal Affection will vanish away: (*) Men rarely gain much by any rough and boisterous Methods of asserting their Prerogative; the less this is brought to Trial the more secure it is, and more likely to be respected. All that can be said, is, that as this is a Case wherein Custom alone hath in all Countries ascertained the Privileges of both Sexes, and here hath left little more than a nominal Superiority to the Man, the likeliest Method to soften and make them obsequious is by Caressing and Endearments, and, where This will not do, the Case was either past Remedy at first, or is past it now. — But,

What saith the Apostle in this Matter? He adviseth the Women "to reverence their Husbands, to submit themselves to them, and to be subject to them in all things;" Yet let not the Husband plume himself too highly upon this, for this Restriction immediately follows, "AS IT IS FIT IN THE LORD," (i.e. in the Sense of an ancient Father,) "where nothing is required contrary to good Sense, or any Rule of Virtue:" – and, if good Sense is to determine, either as to Decency or Virtue, the Superiority will but too often be on the Female Side. — In a Word, If

(*) Women, for a little Goodness, look for much Praise; but for much Evil no Reflection.

If it ſhould be granted, that Men have, in Truth, the Superiority of Underſtanding, which they generally arrogate, there is no Inſtance wherein they can ſhew it to greater Advantage, or are under higher Obligations to the Exerciſe of it. Let them make what Experiments they will, we may anſwer for the Iſſue, that if Love and Tenderneſs will not wing to an obliging and agreeable Deportment, neither will Harſhneſs or Severity: – even a Servant will with great Reluctance, if at all, obey a Maſter who gives no other Reaſon for that Obedience than his Will and Humour, and enforces it by ſurly and moroſe Meaſures. Mutual Complacency and Forbearance, therefore, are abſolutely and indiſpenſibly neceſſary in the married State; and Power is never ſo amiable as when cloathed with Meekneſs and Humility; and the Superiority of our own Underſtanding, will be always moſt evident, when it condeſcends to forgive, and relieve the Weakneſs of another. (*) In

(*) As depraved as human Nature is, there are few Tempers ſo hard, but a perpetual Endeavour to pleaſe, will ſoften into Love and Gratitude; we muſt not always expect to meet with all we could wiſh for in our Companions, becauſe the ſweeteſt Minds may be ſoured by Accident or Misfortune, & the cheerfuleſt Face ſaddened by Pain and Sickneſs; and if we reſolve to be in Good-humour ourſelves, no longer than whilſt all about us continue ſo, our ſocial Happineſs will very ſeldom, it is feared, be of any long Duration.

In all Cases, if we would have those under us, regular and observant of their Duty, we must be first so of our own, and give the Example in Gentleness, and, above all, in a strict Regard to Decency and Virtue, and to all the Duties of Religion; for, after all that can be said, it is Religion alone, which can secure the Joys and Comforts of this, and every other State.

Religion, indeed, will not raise Love where there was none before, but it will always preserve it where it is; it will calm the Mind, purify the Heart, regulate the Desires, correct any Perverstity of Will, check evil Ones and subdue them, it will make us mild and tractable, sober and chast; it will commence a Kind of Heaven here upon Earth, and lead to everlasting Bliss in the Heaven of Heavens hereafter. — But further,

If the Husband is already possessed of Love, Fidelity, Tenderness, Prudence, and Good-Nature, he will always remember that most essential Part of his Duty to his Wife, which consists in the Care and Protection of

(*) "Let us remember, then, that as Afflictions do not; so neither do Pleasures spring out of the Dust; every Relative and Social Duty is founded on mutual Obligations; where the Seeds of Love & Friendship are not sown, or where what springs up from them is not cultivated and improved, it will be but "as the Grass growing upon the House-top, whereof, (as the glorious Language of the Psalmist expresseth it) the Mower filleth not his Hand, neither he that bindeth up the Sheaves his Bosom."

of her, in providing for, and maintaining her, as well as his Situation in Life will permit. This ariſeth from the Conſideration of their being one Fleſh. "Men (the Apoſtle tells us) ought ſo to love their Wives as their own Bodies; he that loveth his Wife, loveth himſelf; for no Man ever yet hated his own Fleſh, but nouriſheth and cheriſheth it, even as the Lord the Church."

From hence it appears, that the ſame Obligations that lie upon Huſbands, for their own Support and Nouriſhment, engage them alſo to the Support & Nouriſhment of their Wives. And this is accounted the more direct and immediate Duty of the Huſband, becauſe the Adminiſtration and Management of the Fortune is (generally ſpeaking) in his Hands; That being, by the Divine Appointment, his Province; as being better fitted by Nature for the Fatigues and Buſineſs of Life; and, for the moſt Part, endowed with a greater Strength both of Body and Mind, to enable him to make a proper Proviſion for his Family. The Buſineſs of the Woman being the Care of the Houſe and Family, to relieve the Man from the Fatigue of domeſtic Concerns; and to be, in this Reſpect, a Help-meet for him; and to ſee that what he provides is prudently managed, and carefully preſerved.

Woman is left by Nature, weak and defenceleſs; on Man, therefore, who is more able, ſhe muſt rely

for Aid and Support: which ſhe bargains for, on her Part, and He engages for on his; (*) from the Hands of parental Tenderneſs, for the moſt Part, he receives her, whoſe Goodneſs he promiſes to ſupply, and whoſe Indulgence he hath ſworn to imitate: — A Wife, therefore, hath an indiſputable Right to ſhare in all the good things which Providence allots him, and he hath no Right to with-hold any thing from her, but his Sorrows and Misfortunes. — And,

In Order to do this the more effectually, ſome Degree of Sobriety, Vigilance and Aſſiduity is neceſſary: without this a Man cannot provide even for himſelf; and the Difficulty will, of Courſe, increaſe, in Proportion to the Number of thoſe he is to take-care of. (‡) Diligence and Frugality, therefore, are, in a Huſband, Qualities eſſentially neceſſary; becauſe the Welfare and Happineſs of the whole Family depends upon him:

(*) See the Office of Matrimony, in this Caſe.

(‡) Marriage, that ſhould be a Fountain of all Bleſſings and Enjoyments, often proves, by the Diſpoſition of a Man's Fortune, a heavy Burden that cruſhes him: It is then that a Wife and Children are a ſtrong Temptation to Deceit and unaccountable Gains; and that a Man finds himſelf betwixt two very Extremes, Diſhoneſty and Indigence. Thouſands have acted contrary to their Conſcience, and, with a Behaviour more pitiable than their Circumſtances, crouched beneath the Preſſure of hard Fortune, to low and ſordid Complyances; who, it is charitably hoped, would have ſtood upright without that galling Load.

him: if he falls, he falls like Sampson, and draws after him the Ruins of the whole Building. (*)

But, true Love and Affection is not confined within the narrow Bounds of our own Existence; it extends itself to future Times, and lives, as it were, beyond the Grave. The good Husband, therefore, will think himself bound, not only to provide for, and maintain his Wife whilst she remains here with him, but also when he is separated from her, by reserving, if possible, for her, according as her Situation in Life hath been, such Provision for her future Support, Comfort and Satisfaction, as may make her less sensible of his Loss, and more so of his unalterable Regard and Affection for her. (‡) Whoever

(*) *Fundamentum Domûs Trabs est.*
Cum cepit quassata Domus subsidere, Partes
In inclinatas omne recumbit Onus.
In te omnis Domus inclinata recumbit.
On Thee the Fortune of our House depends.

(‡) The Widow and the Fatherless do, surely, of all, most deserve Relief and Commiseration; and tho they sometimes may, yet it is but too certain they do not always meet with it. What is the Business of One especially, the Husband, is generally neglected by others. Men have Connections of their own, which demand their Attention. It is no Wonder, therefore, that the Cries of the Widow are not heard, nor her Tears regarded; because the very same Reason which made One so careful of, and so anxious for her whilst he lived, is the very Reason why so many neglect her when he is no more;

Whoever gives himself Time to consider, to what extraordinary Difficulties and Sufferings, God, by his Order and Appointment, has most unavoidably subjected and exposed the Women to above the Men, as well as by their own natural Frame and Make, as by a great many sad, and usual Accidents, will see himself obliged, in common Reason and Ingenuity, to deal gently with them, to sustain them under their Infirmities, and, by Patience and Forbearance, to endeavour to make their Burden lighter, and comfortably to support and provide for them; especially, if he considers further, notwithstanding these Disadvantages, of what singular Use and Benefit a good and prudent Companion is, in all the Vicissitudes of Life, what Solace in Health, what Comfort in Sickness, what Help in Distress, what Security in Trouble, is occasioned by her Means; and above all, what Labour and Hardships, what Watchings and Disquietudes, as well as the many humble

her Circumstance, at best, is the Lot of Anguish and Disquietude. With all that the Husband can do, she must be wretched; and the least he can do, is to take-care that she shall not be destitute. The better she hath always lived, the better he should take-care she always may live: the longer she hath been used to Affluence and Plenty, the less, doubtless, will she be able to struggle with Penury and Want: her present Happiness (where no Provision is made) can only contribute to her future Misery; and the Joys which are past, will embitter the Sorrows that are to come. This, therefore, is a Duty which Love will always dictate, and Gratitude inspire.

humble Offices, she is content to bear, with all the Cheerfulness and Delight imaginable, in bringing up the Children that are the Joy of his Heart, and the Strength of his Old-Age: He that considers this, instead of taking pleasure in opposing and insulting the Wife of his Bosom, will find himself bound in Gratitude, and by the mutual Pledges of their Love, to nourish and cherish her, even as his own Flesh. But,

Lastly, and above all, are requisite Piety and Virtue, which will facilitate to every other Particular in the Character before us – will make the Husband chuse prudently, and prudently conduct himself afterwards in it: – But what I chiefly design is with Respect to the Wife.

Women are generally respected and esteemed in the World, according to the Merit and Character of their Husbands. For her Sake therefore, as well as for his own, he should be more than ordinarily careful to preserve his Reputation unspotted, and maintain his Honour and Integrity inviolable. If he is careless, she will be reproached; if he is vicious, she will be condemned: his Follies will make her contemptible, and his Vices render her unhappy.

Thus the Innocence of the One may suffer for the Guilt of the other; and those who have not committed a Crime, be involved in the Punishment of it.

If the Husband, therefore, loves his Wife, he will be virtuous and good, that she may be honoured and respected; if he loves his Wife, he will be pious and religious, that he may make her pious and religious also; (*) and finally, they will be mutually instant in Prayer to God for each other, and strive together for their spiritual as well as temporal Welfare.

Without this, their Love cannot be accounted perfect; for that Love can never be supposed to be grounded on Virtue and Religion, that can easily permit any one to ruin to their temporal and eternal Ruin, when it is in their Power to prevent it. (†) Before

(*) To this End it is highly necessary, tho' it is not always attended to, that the Husband & Wife be as much united as possible, with Regard to religious Sentiments; that they may "walk together in the House of God as Friends." See Page 44.

Difference of Opinion in this important Point will naturally create a Difference in others: and doubtless, where Happiness is to depend on Union and Harmony, we should be careful to remove every possible Cause of Dissention.

(†) As the Husband is the Head of the Wife, so is he the Fountain of Knowledge and Wisdom, and therefore should instruct, advise, and direct her in all Emergencies, especially in her Duty to God, and in the great things of her eternal Good & Welfare, when he finds her ignorant of any important Point, or ordinary Means of Salvation, or even necessary Business of common Life; for so much is implied in that Command to the Corinthians, where St. Paul bids the "Wives learn of their Husbands at Home;" which also tacitly implies,

Before I dismiss this Subject, or adduce the important Motives for the due Discharge of it, I would remark the very strong Terms by which the Scripture in general points out the Ardency of that Affection it requires of the Husband towards the Wife.

"Let every One of you (says the Apostle) so love his Wife even as himself." And again, "Men ought to love their Wives, as their own Bodies: he that loveth his Wife, loveth himself. For no Man ever yet hated his own Flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it." Language this, which, if that Latitude were admitted in the conjugal Relation which some Men have contended for, would lose all, or at least much of its Propriety and Force. The Relation is very intimate. A Wife is the chiefest Object of our Love, even above Parents, Children, and Friends. We must "leave Father and Mother for our Wife." "We must love our Wives as ourselves," be as careful and tender of their Good as our own, and resent any Injury done to them the same as if offered to us, they

Two

Inquire, that a Master of a Family should endeavour after Christian Knowledge, in Order to perform this Duty of Instruction to such as are under his Care. Indeed, where the Wife is blessed with greater Prudence and Knowledge than the Husband, he then ought to submit to her Advice, tho' not to her Authority; but this she must render him with all Modesty, Respect, and Submission.

Two being but one Flesh. (*) So that we are to love our Wives with as much Tenderness and natural Affection as we do ourselves; nay, Husbands must love their Wives as Christ did the Church, which was better than he did his own Life, for he shed his most precious Blood for her.

Impressed with a deep Sense of this unparalleled Instance of Friendship and Benignity, ought not our Breasts to glow with an Affection towards our Wives, resembling That which He bears to us? It is an Argument addressed to the tendercst Feelings of our Heart, – it is irresistible. It is not, therefore, general Good-will, or friendly Respect only, which this, the most endearing of all Connections, demands. No. Considering her as Part of himself – as One with himself, his Heart, his Soul, his Affections ought to be indissolubly knit to her, for so, and so only, will the salutary Ends which divine Benevolence has proposed by the Marriage-Institution, be happily and effectually answered. And

(*) Nothing can be a finer Emblem of this Union, than the two Pieces of Wood which God commanded the Prophet Ezekiel to join together, and they became one in his Hand. (Eze. xxxvii.)

The Marriage-Tie being, by the divine Command, like the covering and incloſing Rind, which bound both into one Body, circulating all the mutual and endearing Offices of Affection and Interest thro the One, in the Marriage Union, as nutritive and vital Juices are circulated thro the other, in the natural.

And to this he is engaged from all the natural and moral Motives that can influence a rational Creature.

As 1ſt. From the Nature and Advantages of it.

It is impoſſible, we think, that a Man ſhould conceive a pleaſing Idea, not only of the external Accompliſhments of a Woman, but of her Underſtanding, Diſpoſition and Piety, ſo conceive of them, as to perſuade her, on the Grounds of correſpondent Affections, to join Hands with him in this intimate Relation, and not love her. No. Her Health, Eaſe, and Happineſs he will ſtudiouſly conſult. His anxious Attention to Buſineſs will be excited and ſoftened by the Proſpect of her ſharing with him in all the Fruits of his honeſt Labours. "He that is married (ſaith the Apoſtle) careth for the things of the World, how he may pleaſe his Wife." Amidſt the Toils of the Day he will comfort himſelf with the Hope of enjoying her tender and enlivening Diſcourſe at Night. Her Preſence, ſurrounded with her Offspring, the dear Pledges of their mutual Love, will render his own Manſion, however plain, far more chearful and agreeable to him than any other Home he may occaſionally viſit. The Anxieties and Cares attendant on her maternal and domeſtic Character, he will in every poſſible Way ſooth; and endeavour by a thouſand endearing Expreſſions to allay the

Fears incidental to female Tenderness. When she is happy, he will be happy; when she is afflicted, he will be afflicted with her. To her he will on all Occasions unbosom his Soul, and "his Heart will safely trust in her;" and while her Children rise up and call her blessed, with great Affection and Delight he also will praise her." If, in fine, a cross Accident at any Time occasions an hasty Sally of the Passions, Love will quickly repress the Heat, and by renewed Expressions of Tenderness add Strength to a Friendship which no adverse Circumstance can dissolve. — But it were endless to enumerate all the happy Fruits of conjugal Affection. Those however of a religious Kind deserve our particular Attention. But the Limits of this Discourse will allow us only to observe, that the Man who hath formed this Connection with a due Regard to the most important of all Concerns, will no Doubt "dwell with his Wife, (as St. Peter expresseth it,) according to Knowledge, as being an Heir together with her of the Grace of Life." Love will sweeten their religious Counsels and Intercourses, and add Fervour to their united Addresses to Heaven; "and so their Prayers," to use the Language of the same Apostle, "will not be hindered." And, To these Duties the Husband will be moved from Considerations peculiar to this State.

As

As 11. Wives are equal to their Husbands: And Equality, we all know, establishes Affection & Friendship in Life. This the great Author of our Nature well knew, and therefore He created the first Pair perfectly equal; and, to express the Equality, as Divines observe, He formed Eve from the very Substance of Adam, and, from his Side, rather than from any other Part, either higher or lower, the Head or Feet, to signify, that she is neither to govern, nor yet be a Slave: that as she is not to insult, so neither is she to be insulted; but to be treated upon a natural Equality, with Affection and Regard.

Again, Union is necessary to Love, and here it is the most intimate; they have the same Desires and Aversions: the first Pair being made of one Flesh.

And this natural Union of them at first, was but an Emblem of that moral and mystical Union, that was to be established between all succeeding Ones to the End of the World.

And hence it is, that when Adam had declared his Sense of this Union that joined him to Eve, he adds, as from himself, (yet most evidently by divine Appointment,) "therefore shall a Man leave his Father and his Mother, and shall cleave unto his Wife; and they two shall be one Flesh:" signifying, that the Bonds of Marriage should from that Moment be more powerful than

the Bonds of Nature; and that the Tie of conjugal Affection, which bound a Man to his Wife, should exceed the neareſt and ſtrongeſt Ties of Blood: and for that Reaſon a Man ſhould forſake even his Father and his Mother, from whom he derived his Being, and cleave to his Wife, which was to be his ſecond Self, and of Conſequence nearer and dearer to him even than his Parents, as we ourſelves are nearer and dearer to ourſelves than any other Mortals.

And indeed, when we conſider the Nature of this Union, we ſhall ſee evident Reaſon why Man and Wife ſhould be nearer and dearer to one another than any other Mortals. — For,

1ſt. They are united upon the Terms of as intimate a Correſpondence, and as univerſal and entire a Communion, as if they were one Soul and one Body.

And, 2dly, Their Intereſt is in all Reſpects perfectly the ſame. That which tends to make One happy, naturally tends to make the other happy alſo; and that which tends to make the one miſerable and uneaſy, to make the other miſerable at the ſame Time.

The Intereſt of the neareſt Friends in the World, out of Marriage, will often interfere; and it requires great Generoſity and Diſintereſtedneſs not to repine oftentimes at the good Succeſs of the neareſt and dearеſt Friends; becauſe, how intimate ſoever their Correſpondence

respondence may be; their Interests are distinct, and often opposite: nor is it possible to put a Case, wherein they are in all Respects the same, except in Marriage.

Suppose a Brother that we loved as our own Life: yet still our Estate is not his Estate; our Honour is not his Honour; our Children are not his Children. But in Marriage the Case is actually so. Your Estate is your Wife's Estate; it is actually her Property, as much as yours. Your Honour is her Honour; and your Children are her Children, as dear and near to her, as they are to you; and the Care of them, and Provision for them, as much her Concern, and her Interest. And hence it is that the Idea of an entire and perfect Friendship is no-where to be met-with but in the married State, for in Marriage the Union is for Life, and the Interest is always the same, the Reasons for mutual Affection and Confidence must always continue, and increase with generous and virtuous Spirits, to the last Moment of Life. To say nothing of those powerful Engagements to Love and Tenderness, from the natural Attractions of a modest and amiable Woman, and those thousand Endearments, (no-where else to be met with,) which God hath in his great Wisdom established for the Continuance of so useful a Commerce, without which Society could not subsist. (Serm. 37.)

Take

"Take unto thyself a Wife, then, and obey the Ordinance of God; take unto thyself a Wife, and become a faithful Member of Society.

"But examine with Care, and fix not suddenly; on thy present Choice depends thy future Happiness.

"If much of her Time is consumed in Dress and Adornments, – if she is enamoured with her own Beauty, and delighted with her own Praise, – if she laugheth much, and talketh loud, – if her Foot abideth not in her Father's House, and her Eyes with Boldness rove on the Faces of Men: tho her Beauty were as the Sun in the Firmament of Heaven, turn thy Face from her Charms, turn thy Feet from her Paths, and suffer not thy Soul to be ensnared by the Allurements of Imagination. (*) — But,

"When thou findest Sensibility of Heart, joined with Softness of Manners; an accomplished Mind, with a Form agreeable to thy Fancy; take her Home to thy House, she is worthy to be thy Friend, thy Companion in Life, the Wife of thy Bosom – forego her not, for her Grace is above Gold: – rejoice with her; let her be as the loving Hind, and the pleasant Roe – let her Breasts satisfy thee at all Times, and be thou ravished always with her Love.

"Live joyfully with the Wife whom thou lovest, all the Days which God giveth thee; for that is thy

(*) See No. 419, of the Spectator.

For-

Portion in this Life, and in thy Labour which thou takeſt under the Sun.

"O cheriſh her, as a Bleſſing ſent thee from Heaven, let the Kindneſs of thy Behaviour endear thee to her Heart.

"She is the Miſtreſs of thy Houſe; treat her therefore with Reſpect, that thy Servants may obey her.

"Oppoſe not her Inclination without Cauſe; ſhe is the Partner of thy Cares, make her alſo the Partaker of thy Joys, and the Companion of thy Pleaſures.

"Reprove her Faults with Gentleneſs, exact not her Obedience with Rigour. Truſt thy Secrets in her Breaſt; her Counſels are ſincere, thou ſhalt not be deceived, (*)

"Be faithful to her Bed, for ſhe is the Mother of thy Children. "When

(*) *Consilium arcanum Mulieri nè aperias.*
Mulieri nè credo, nè mortuæ quidem.

However, thoſe Women who, by Reaſon and Virtue, have acquired a Firmneſs and Solidity of Soul, are as ſure Repoſitories of a Secret, as the moſt Maſculine Confident; ſuch, therefore, ſhould be cleared of the general Accuſation. Their Example ſhews the reſt that Nature has put them under no fatal Neceſſity of being thus impotent. — Men, in general, are more reſerved in their Friend's Concerns, than their own; Women, on the other Hand, keep their own Secrets better than another's. Serm. CCCLXXI.

"When Pain and Sickness assault her, let thy Tenderness sooth her Affliction; a Look from thee of Pity and Love, shall alleviate her Grief, or mitigate her Pain, and be of more Avail than ten Physicians.

"Consider the Tenderness of her Sex, the Delicacy of her Frame; and be not severe to her Weakness; but remember thine own Infirmities.

"Honour her not the less, because she is in thy Power; and despise him who hath said, "Wouldest thou love her less? marry her." What hath put her in thy Power, but her Confidence in thy Virtue? Shouldest thou love her less, for being more oblidged to her? If thou wert just in thy Courtship of her; though thou neglectest her while thou hast her, yet shall her Loss be bitter to thy Soul.

"He who thinketh another best, only because he possesseth her; if he be not wiser than thee; he is at least more happy."

Sermon

SERMON CCCLXXII.

Duty of Wives.

Eph. v. 33. "And the Wife ſee that ſhe reverence "her Huſband."

As all Societies, civil and religious, originate from Families; ſo Families derive from that firſt and moſt important of all ſocial Connections, the Conjugal Relation. Upon the right Diſcharge, therefore, of the Duties of this Relation, the Welfare and Happineſs of Mankind in general very much depend. —To explain and enforce theſe Duties, is, and hath been, the Object of my Intention.

Under an appoſite Text (*) we have conſidered and enforced the Duty of Huſbands; the Words before us equally lead us to explain and recommend the Duties belonging to the other Branch of this intimate Union. "And the Wife ſee that ſhe reverence her Huſband."

The Duties of Wives to their Huſbands, are, Fidelity and Aſſiſtance, Obedience and Submiſſion, Humility and Meekneſs, Prudence and Diſcretion, Reſpect

(*) The preceding Diſcourſe.

ſpect and Reverence, Tenderneſs and Compaſſion, Love and Affection, and finally, Piety and Virtue.

First, The ſovereign Virtue requiſite in the married State, is FIDELITY, without which it cannot ſubſiſt; – No Perfections or Qualities whatever, can make amends for the Want of it: no Excuſes whatever can be admitted to palliate the leaſt Departure from it: Both Parties are bound, in the moſt ſolemn Manner, to maintain and preſerve it inviolable, and the Infringement of it will render them obnoxious both to God and Man: but the Crime of Infidelity is more ſhameful and ſcandalous in the Woman; becauſe it is committed againſt the Rules of a more reſerved and virtuous Education, and againſt the natural Decency and Modeſty of the Sex; and, at the ſame Time, is of far worſe Conſequence to the Honour of Families, becauſe it brings a laſting Stain of Infamy along with it; ſhe being the Guardian of her Huſband's Honour, as well as her own, and who is puniſhed for her Iniquity; and, what is worſe, it often robs the right Heir of his Inheritance, and ſubſtitutes a ſpurious Offſpring into his Place; an Injury that is the more to be dreaded and avoided, becauſe, when once it is committed, it is impoſſible to be repaired.

Thus much, however, may be ſaid in Honour of that Sex, that this Crime is leſs frequent among them;

and rarely committed till the Husband's Infidelity, or ill Conduct, hath first provoked to it. And this is the true Reason why the Infidelity of the Wife reflects so much Dishonour upon the Husband, because (generally speaking) his own Vices and ill Conduct have brought the Evil upon him. And therefore the only true Way for the Husband to secure his Reputation in this Point, as well as his Wife's Virtue, and the Honour of his Family, is to behave himself with so much Fidelity and Tenderness towards her, as may entirely engage her Affections, as well as her Conscience to him, and him only.

And indeed, let any Man reflect seriously upon the Treatment the Generality of Wives meet-with from their Husbands, and then think impartially, whether they have not too much Reason to be provoked at their Rudeness and Neglect. Before Marriage they are adored and preferred before all the World; but soon, very soon after, they are slighted and disregarded, as if they were unworthy of common Esteem; (*) and they are slighted for the very same Reasons for which they should be respectfully and tenderly treated. They observe at the same Time, that their Husbands can still treat other Women with Respect and Complaisance; and that other Men still continue to use them with

(*) See the Note, Page 93.

with Reſpect and Complaiſance, and none but the Huſband ſlights and deſpiſes them; as if Marriage, which is the ſtrongeſt Engagement to Tenderneſs and Affection, were but a Privilege for Contempt and Rudeneſs.

This is in Truth provoking; and doubtleſs, the Generality of thoſe Women who have been ſo unhappy and ſo wicked as to violate the Marriage-Vow, have been provoked to it by the Rudeneſs and Neglect of their Huſbands, or urged to it in Revenge of their prior Falſehood.

It is not indeed to be imagined, that Men ſhould treat their Wives with the ſame Reſerve and formal Complaiſance after Marriage; This, the Freedom and Eaſe of Friendſhip forbids; but why Friendſhip and Freedom ſhould be a Reaſon for ill Treatment, is not to be conceived; they ſhould ſurely be Reaſons of a very different Conduct; and doubtleſs there is not a righter Rule in Life, or of more Importance for the Preſervation of Friendſhip, than this, never to let Familiarity exclude Reſpect.

But after all, Wives that are ſo unhappy as to be too much provoked by the ill Treatment of their Huſbands, ſhould always remember, that their Huſband's Guilt doth not juſtify their's; and much leſs will Neglect or Rudeneſs in the Huſband juſtify Infidelity in the Wife.

Wife. There are Arts of Decency and good Behaviour which have inexpreſſible Charms; and if a Woman can but have Conſtancy enough to practiſe theſe, and to continue in well-doing, they are almoſt irreſiſtible; and it is ſcarcely poſſible to imagine any Huſband ſo brutal, as not to be at laſt reclaimed by them. And Women would be more ſolicitous to reclaim their Huſbands in this Manner, by a Courſe of good Behaviour, if they conſidered that in ſo doing they conſulted their own real Intereſt, and the Intereſt of their Children; and greatly recommended themſelves and their Concerns, by theſe Means, to the Favour and Protection of God; and at the ſame Time ſaved a Soul alive. Whereas the contrary Behaviour can tend to nothing but the utter Ruin of their Children, and their own mutual Deſtruction, both of Body and Soul. — Indeed,

There is no need of ſaying much in Commendation of the great Virtue of Chaſtity to Wives; for they cannot but know, that, without it, they are Wives no longer; the Band of Wedlock is immediately diſſolved before God, and before Man; as ſoon as the Huſband pleaſes to aſk the Aſſiſtance of the Law. — But,

It is to be hoped there are but few Inſtances of Infidelity to be found in a Chriſtian Country.

The next Duty a Wife owes her Husband is Assistance; (i.e) Aid, Comfort, Relief, and Support, in all the Anxieties and Exigencies of Life.

She ought to be helpful and assisting to him in all things; to his Soul, by promoting Religion and Piety in him; to his Body, by expressing due Care and Tenderness; to his good Name, by defending his Reputation from any injurious Slanders; to his Estate, by a prudent and frugal Management of all his domestic Concerns. She is not to dispose of any Part of his Estate contrary to his Mind and Consent; her proper Office being to govern the Family with Industry, Care, and Fidelity. And hence it was, that when Adam was created, God declared it "not good for him to be alone," and therefore he adds, "I will make him a Help-meet for him." And therefore such Wives as think it beneath them to trouble themselves about low domestic Concerns, that are above the Care of their Husbands and Family, would do well to consider how they answer the End of their Creation. Surely they cannot imagine they were made for no higher or nobler Ends than to dress, or visit, or to be esteemed, like a Statue or Picture, for a fine Shape, or a fair Outside. Are these Purposes worthy of infinite Wisdom and Goodness? No; God intended them not only for the Support of Society, but for Con-

Consolation, Friendship, and Assistance; to be Partakers of the Husband's Joys and Cares; to lighten the Labours of Life, and increase all its Enjoyments, by sharing in them. For, as Cares are lessened by being divided, so Joys are increased by being communicated. And therefore what can be more desirable in Life, than to have a prudent, a faithful, and an affectionate Friend, who is perfectly in our Interest, to alleviate all the Evils, and increase all the Happinesses that befal us?

A good Wife, therefore, is to relieve her Husband under all his household Cares, and to lighten them, by dividing them with him, and bearing her Part in the Burden. And therefore, the least, that is to be expected from a Wife, is, that whilst the Husband is busied in Affairs that call off his Attention from the Care of his Family, that Care be supplied by her; and this constitutes the true Character of a good Wife; at least that Part of it which is of principal and most universal Use in Life.

The Care and good Œconomy of a Family is a Business of a very distinct Nature from that of making a Provision for the Support of it; the Care of providing for a Family, for the most Part, resteth upon the Husband; because that is a Business of more Labour and Fatigue than Women are ordinarily able to undergo;

dergo; but then the Adminiſtration of what is ſo provided, is the Woman's Province: thus is the Labour of Life divided; and if either fail in their proper Buſineſs, the Affairs of the Family are in a ruinous State, And upon this is Founded that known Obſervation, That "a Man muſt aſk his Wife whether he ſhall be rich;" foraſmuch as few Men are able to take ſufficient Care both abroad and at home; and foreign Care will be of ſmall Uſe, if the domeſtic be neglected. And therefore it is, that Solomon, in the Character of a good Wife, tells us, that "the Heart of her Huſband ſhall ſafely truſt in her, ſo that he ſhall have no Need of Spoil." That is, ſhe will manage his houſehold Affairs with ſo much Prudence and Fidelity, that her Huſband ſhall need no indirect Methods of Fraud or Oppreſſion to ſupport her Luxury and Extravagance. Again, he tells us, that "ſhe looketh well to the Ways of her Houſehold, and eateth not the Bread of Idleneſs." (*) He

(*) *Uxorem Ædes curare decet.*

Tho' Solomon's Deſcription of a wife and good Woman may be thought too mean and mechanical for this refined Generation; yet, certain it is, that the Buſineſs of a Family is the moſt profitable and moſt honourable Study they can employ themſelves in.

Egregiè Domum juvat Mulier impigra.

"As the Sun when it ariſeth in the high Heavens, ſo is the Beauty of a good Wife in the ordering of her Houſe." See an Extreme in this Caſe, No. 323, of the Spectator; and Contraſt, in the laſt Part of No. 482.

He adds, indeed, many other Circumſtances of great Induſtry; ſuch as her riſing up by Night, and plying the Spindle and Diſtaff, and providing Cloaths for her Huſband and Family; but theſe being Circumſtances of Induſtry peculiarly adapted to the ſimpler Ages of the World, and, therefore, not neceſſary to be inſiſted on in this Place.

We now proceed to another moſt eſſential and neceſſary Duty of Wives, [viz] Obedience.

Man and Woman were at firſt created perfectly equal. For altho there are ſome Paſſages in St. Paul's Epiſtles which imply a ſuperior Dignity in the Man, yet are there none which infer a ſuperior Authority, or Right of Dominion, on his Part, before the Fall. And indeed, when Adam and Eve were yet in their Innocence; when their Underſtandings were clear, and their Wills upright; when their Intereſt and Inclinations were in all Reſpects the ſame; and Pride and Vanity had introduced no Competition of Superiority between them; there was not the leaſt need of giving either of them Power and Authority over the other: becauſe the greateſt Pleaſure either of them could be capable of, in that Condition, was to do every thing that they knew would be moſt acceptable to the other; and conſequently there was no Need of Power, or Command, or Force, to oblige either of them to do what either of them deſired. (Serm. 372) But

But when the Woman ſinned, thro' a vain Deſire of Knowledge, and poſſibly from a vain Hope of being ſuperior to her Huſband, in the only Point that gave him Pre-eminence over her, it pleaſed God to puniſh that Vanity in a Diſappointment of the very End it aimed at; and to make that very Deſire of Pre-eminence a Reaſon of Subjection: decreeing, that from thenceforward her Deſires ſhould be referred to the Will and Pleaſure of her Huſband, either to reject or comply with them, as he thought fit. "Thy Deſire (ſaith God) ſhall be to thy Huſband, and he ſhall rule over thee." And indeed,

The ſame Deſire of Pre-eminence is, for the moſt Part, the Cauſe of their Subjection to this Day.

There are few Women of tolerable Diſcretion, that might not entirely preſide in their Families, or at leaſt be perfectly at Eaſe, under the Government of their Huſbands, if they did not too apparently affect to rule. And this, as it is exceedingly imprudent, and the Occaſion of almoſt all the Diſquiets that diſtract the married State, ſo is it, in Truth, immoral and irreligious; ſince they are expreſsly commanded in the Scriptures to ſubmit and be obedient to their Huſbands.

Society cannot poſſibly ſubſiſt without Subordination: None will obey where All will command; and then Miſchief muſt be the End of all their Actions.

The

The ſame is equally neceſſary in all private Connections; ſupreme Power muſt be lodged in One Hand, and the only Doubt that can ariſe, if any Doubt there be, is, to whom that Power is inveſted.

The Words of the Apoſtle, with Regard to this, are very plain and explicit. "The Head of the Woman is the Man, for the Woman is of the Man. The Man was not created for the Woman, but the Woman for the Man." Man was prior to the Woman in the Creation, and is therefore ſuperior in Nature. "A Woman is not to uſurp Authority over the Man, for Adam was firſt formed, and then Eve." The Apoſtle therefore directs Wives to "be diſcreet, chaſte, Keepers at Home, good and obedient to their Huſbands." Priority of Birth, at their original Formation, ſeems to imply and point out the Precedency. Again,

"As the Church is ſubject to Chriſt, ſo muſt Wives be ſubject to their Huſbands in every thing." Again,

"Wives ſubmit yourſelves unto your own Huſbands as unto the Lord; for the Huſband is the Head of the Wife, even as Chriſt is the Head of the Church; and he is the Saviour of the Body." That is, as Chriſt and the Church make one myſtical Body, of which Chriſt is the Head; ſo Man and Wife make one Body, of which the Man is the Head; and as Chriſt is the Saviour of the Church, ſo likewiſe is the Huſband

given to the Wife, to be a Saviour to her; to maintain, and protect, and defend her, and by his ſuperior Prudence to provide for her Well-being; and to conduct her in every Inſtance of Diſcretion and Duty. But then, as the Head hath no Intereſt of its own, diſtinct from the reſt of the Body, nor any Advantage over the other Parts, unleſs the Care of directing and providing for them be deemed an Advantage; ſo hath the Huſband no true Intereſt ſeparate from the Wife, nor any Advantage from his Superiority, but the Care and Trouble that attends it. And, therefore, neither hath he any Reaſon to pride himſelf upon his Power, nor ſhe to repine for her Subjection; ſince a Condition of Subjection to a wiſe and good Government, is beyond all Queſtion, the happieſt Condition in Life; and a lawleſs Licentiouſneſs would but put us into the Power of every Paſſion and every Folly, to hurry or ſeduce us to Deſtruction.

From hence it follows, that, as the Authority of the Huſband is a rational Authority, devolved upon him by God, for the Direction, and Preſervation, and Well-being of the Wife; it ſhould never be exerciſed but with that View, and that in an humane and rational Manner; conſequently, blind Tyranny and brutal Force ſhould be baniſhed the Society of reaſonable Creatures, as being contradictory to the very Nature

and

and End of the Marriage-union. "So ought Men to love their Wives, (saith St. Paul,) even as their own Bodies. He that loveth his Wife, loveth himself; for no Man ever yet hated his own Flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church." Dominion was given to Man, not for Oppression and Abuse, but for Preservation and Protection; on Account of his superior Wisdom and Prudence. Let these, then, be the Reasons and Measures of his Rule; otherwise he defeats the Ends of his Dominion, and at the same Time degrades himself from the Dignity of his Nature, and declares himself unworthy of the Prerogative he is possessed of. And therefore St. Peter directs the Husband, "to dwell with the Wife according to Knowledge, giving Honour unto the Wife, as unto the weaker Vessel." That is, making that Superiority which God hath given him, a Reason, not of Insolence and Abuse, but of Humanity, and Tenderness, and Conjugal Affection.

This is a Reason which carries with it the greatest Conviction; and tho it be granted that there are some Instances of Women excelling many Men in Strength of Body and Abilities of Mind, in Fineness of Parts, Greatness of Capacity, Soundness of Judgment, and Strength of Memory; yet the Number of such neither is, nor was, nor ever will be, great enough to shew

that God intended to give that Sex the Superiority. (*)

Agreeable to the Dictates of Reaſon, in this Reſpect, as indeed, in all others, are the Dictates of Religion.

Obedience of Wives is the Commandment of God himſelf; "Thy Deſire ſhall be to thy Huſband, and he ſhall rule over thee." And, "Wives ſubmit yourſelves to your own Huſbands, as it is fit, in the Lord." (i.e) be aſſured that your Duty towards your Huſbands is Part of your Duty towards God; that when you love and obey the One, you obey and pleaſe the Other. — But.

Becauſe "to be in Subjection" is a Phraſe of indefinite and uncertain Senſe, ſince all Inferiors are commanded to be ſubject to the higher Powers, it will be needful to aſcertain, in what Particulars, "Wives muſt ſubmit themſelves to their Huſbands." — And here,

There is ſomething that ſets out the Bounds both of Power and Obedience, and marks the Tranſgreſſors on

(*) Tho in Regard to Individuals, it may ſo happen that what is here advanced, may be indiſputably true, yet no Argument can from thence be drawn againſt the general Concluſion.

A Son may, and frequently hath a larger Portion of Parts and Underſtanding than his Father; and Servants better Genius, Senſe and Capacity than their Maſters; and yet, it muſt be acknowledged that this, in either Caſe, would be a poor Plea for their Rebellion and Diſobedience. In Truth, Half the Miſeries of Mankind ariſe from Pride and Self-love; from that Vain-conceit we are ſo apt to entertain of Ourſelves, and our own Abilities.

on either Side to be either Tyrants or Rebels; each Superior has his proper and peculiar Sway; and each Inferior, his limited Subjection: Thus, in the Case of Wives and Husbands; the One may exercise a Power that belongs not to them; and the other refuse that Submission which is due. Religion and good Morals claim the first Place in all Obedience; no Command or Example of a Husband, therefore, will excuse a Wife's offending in these Points; she owes him no Subjection in these Matters; and the Husband is a Rebel against God in commanding them, and she with him in the Transgression, if she complies.

In other Matters, common and indifferent, where Reason and Discretion, allowed Custom, Decency and good Fame cannot make their Excuse, there Disobedience will be faulty. And, because it will be asked, who shall be Judges in such Cases? The Answer must be, that Wives must take care, that the Commands they comply not with, may be such as will justify them to any wise, impartial People. Wives must not oppose their Wills to their Husbands', or Reasons to Reasons, unless they are plainly oppressed, lest they be found to contend for the Mastery. (*) The

(*) See Queen Vashti's Conduct in this Case, (Esther, 1st. Chap.) and the King and Nobles' Decision upon the Occasion. See also Note (*) Vol. IV. Page 161.

The good and prudent Wife, who is ſatisfied of the natural, and divinely confirmed Superiority of her Huſband, will conſider that in Caſes of Importance, the Huſband's Knowledge and Experience ſhould make him a better Judge than her; and therefore ſhe ſhould ſubmit; — and, in Matters of little or no Conſequence, it is ſurely ſcarce worth while, to diſpute about them. If Diſputes, however, do ariſe, mutual Good-nature and Condeſcenſion will prevent Acrimony, Bitterneſs and Anger. Let the End propoſed, therefore, in all, be Truth and not Victory, and the Deſire of Both, to convince, and not to conquer. And we may inſiſt upon it, that it is in the Power of moſt Women, by Prudence, Gentleneſs, and Sweetneſs of Temper, to make that Authority of their Huſbands a Source of Eaſe and Happineſs to both.

To Obedience, therefore, ſhould be added Quietneſs and Submiſſion, Humility and Meekneſs. (*)

Women

(*) Let a Woman be decked with all the Embelliſhments of Art and Care; yet if Boldneſs is to be read in her Face, it blots all the Lines of Beauty. *Vel Pater Omnipotens adigat ad Pallidus ad Unctus*
Addi Pudor, quàm ſit victus, aut ima rubebunt.

Modeſty has more Charms than Beauty. Vanity makes Beauty contemptible. *Fœtentia Mulierum, non Color factus arte.*

If we were to form an Image of Dignity in MAN, we ſhould give him Wiſdom and Valour, as being eſſential to the Character of Manhood. In like Manner, if you deſcribe a right Woman in a laudable

Women are to be adorned with a meek & quiet Spirit, with Sobriety, Modeſty, and good Works. Their Countenance, Geſture & Words ſhould be ſuch, as to expreſs the inward Calmneſs & Serenity of their Minds.

The Virtues of a Woman were not meant to glare in the dazling luſtre of publick Buſineſs, but are call as it were, into the Shades of Life, in the mild Majeſty of private, ſocial, domeſtick Happineſs. (*)

Not

laudable Senſe, ſhe ſhould have gentle Softneſs, tender Fear, and all thoſe Parts of Life which diſtinguiſh her from the other Sex; with ſome Subordination to it, but ſuch an Inferiority that makes her more lovely. She ſhould be all over Woman, Kindneſs all her Art, and Beauty all her Arms, her Look, her Voice, her Geſture, and whole Behaviour ſhould be truly Feminine; when Goodneſs is mixed with Fear, it gives a Tincture to all her Charms.

A Woman of great Spirit, and little Underſtanding, expoſes herſelf to Deriſion and Reproach, and is deſpiſed wherever ſhe goes.

(*) When Pericles, the Athenian, had in a public Speech directed himſelf to the ſeveral Ranks & Orders of his Countrymen, He then addreſſed himſelf to his Female Audience thus: "I ſhall addreſs you in a few Words; Aſpire only to thoſe Virtues that are peculiar to your Sex, follow your natural Modeſty, and think it your greateſt Commendation not to be talked of one Way or another."

The utmoſt of a Woman's Character is contained in domeſtic Life, in her Piety towards God, and in the ſeveral Duties of a Daughter, a Siſter, a Wife, and Mother: and the more they endeavour to recommend themſelves in theſe Ways by their Dreſs, Words and Actions, the more eſteemed they certainly will be.

Not that they are to be inſenſible under what befalls them, but to prepare that they do nothing that miſbecomes them: Herein they are to exerciſe their Reaſon and beſt Abilities; Matters, inſtead of being mended by Noiſe and Contention, are rather made worſe. (*) It is not the Way to be reſpected, it not the Way to be beloved. The Folly or Perverſeneſs of Men is not cured, nor any unlucky Accidents remedied, by Fury and Impatience; and thoſe things which would otherwiſe have done but little Hurt, by indiſcreet Management, too often, become the Occaſion of great and real Miſchiefs. Yet, People, who ought to conſider theſe things beſt, are ſo far from inquiring, where and when they muſt obey, and in what Caſes they are at Liberty, that they are evermore at Liberty, and never in Subjection at all, tho in the moſt reaſonable Caſes, but forget their Duty and their Sex together.

In this Caſe what avails all the Pomp and Parade of Life which appears abroad, if, when we ſhift the gaudy flattering Scene, both the Huſband and the Wife are unhappy, where Happineſs muſt begin, at Home?

The Care of themſelves, with Regard to the Families in which Women are born, is the beſt Motive for their being courted to come into the Alliance of other Houſes. — A prudent Woman is in the ſame Claſs of Honour as a Wiſe Man.

(*) See Note (‡), Vol. ix. Page 158, &c.

Home? Whatever Ingredients of Bliſs Providence may have poured into their Cup, domeſtick Misfortunes will render the whole Compoſition diſtaſteful. Fortune and Happineſs, are two very diſtinct Ideas; however, ſome, who have a very wrong Idea of Life, may confound them. For, "better is a Dinner of Herbs where Love is, than a ſtalled Ox, and Hatred therewith." Quietneſs under our own Roof, and Quietneſs in our own Conſcience, are two ſubſtantial Bleſſings, which whoever barters for Shew and Pomp, will find himſelf a Loſer by the Exchange. Abroad, we muſt, more or leſs, find Tribulation; yet, ſo long as our Home is a ſecure and peaceful Retreat from all the Diſappointments and Cares, which we meet-with in that great Scene of Vexation, the World, we may ſtill be tolerably happy:— But, if That which ſhould be our main Sanctuary from Uneaſineſs, becomes our principal Diſquietude, how great muſt our Uneaſineſs be! (*)

The next eſſential Quality of a good Wife, is, Prudence and Diſcretion.

Conqueſts acquired by Force, are maintained by Policy; and the Hearts which Love hath ſubdued, muſt be preſerved by Prudence; the Dominion of Youth and Beauty is arbitrary and deſpotick, but, like other

(*) See the Note, Vol. ix. Page 166.

other Tyranies, ſeldom of any long Duration. Prudence, therefore, the faithful Miniſter, muſt be called-in to ſubdue the Rebel-Paſſions, maintain a due Balance and Proportion, and keep the Sovereign on the Throne.

Whilſt tender Years and Inexperience palliate every Error, and excuſe every Inadvertency, Prudence is not perhaps ſo immediately neceſſary; but when Women have paſt THAT favourable indulgent Seaſon, and have entered into a Situation which calls for the Exerciſe of this Virtue every Hour, it THEN becomes abſolutely and really indiſpenſible; and the Want of it is as inexcuſable as it is fatal and deſtructive. But yet, ſo it is, that almoſt every other Virtue is to be more frequently met-with. At THAT Time of Life when we moſt ſtand in need of it, it is ſeldom ſeen, and not even THEN, till it can be of little Service to us: to Wives, we know, it often comes, when its Power is languid and ineffectual; the Affection of the Huſband is already eſtranged by Infidelity, changed by Indifference, or decayed by Ingratitude; Diſcretion ſteps in at laſt to regain it: like an able Phyſician, it is not called till the laſt Gaſp, when it is much too late to ſave the Patient; (*) whereas, the Prevalency of this Virtue lies in the early and conſtant Application of

(*) *Poſt Mortem Medicus.—Poſt Bellum Auxilium.*

of it, in every Period of Life, in every Method whereby to gain upon, and preſerve the Acquirement in the good Eſteem of their Huſbands, whether in Decency of Appearance, or Propriety of Conduct.

St. Peter, deſigning to make all Women as good Wives and as good Chriſtians as they ought to be, lays down this general Rule, in the firſt Place, that "they muſt be in Subjection to their own Huſbands;" and then he deſcends to particular Injunctions in Order to the ſame good End. One, and a very great One, was, "to have their Converſation chaſte, and coupled with Fear;" (i.e) not only pure and clean Hearts, but alſo a diſcreet Reſervedneſs, and modeſt Carriage outwardly; a careful Regard to Fame and a good Report. He then proceeds to lay down other Rules and Inſtructions; ſuch as will very much forward his Deſign herein, and which particularly regard the Decency of their Appearance, and the Propriety of their Conduct — "whoſe Adorning, (ſays he) let it not be that outward Adorning of plaiting the Hair, and of wearing of Gold, and of putting on of Apparel: but let it be the hidden Man of the Heart, in That which is not corruptible, even the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which, in the Sight of God, is of great Price."

Not, that becoming Order, which the Wiſdom and Cuſtom of all Times and Places have agreed upon as moſt convenient to difference People from one another, and, in the Matter of Quality, to prevent all Diſorder, Confuſion and Diſreſpect, is hereby interdicted and forbidden; (*) No: but only ſuch Coſtlineſs of Apparel as exceeds the Quality and Dignity of the Wearer, or may excite Pride and Wantonneſs in ourſelves, and Contempt towards others. (‡) — But,

As

(*) See the Note, Vol. xi. Page 21.

(‡) Some of the Ancients ſeem to allow the Wives a greater Liberty in Dreſſing, than other ſingle People; but they ſay, it ſhould be only where it is fairly probable, at leaſt, that the Affections of the Huſbands cannot otherwiſe be eaſily retained: but, they, at the ſame Time, reproach the Folly and Lightneſs of thoſe Men, who conſidered ſuch Appearances more than the true and only Ornaments, the Virtues and good Qualities of Women.

Women, who put on their fine Attire, in ſure Hope of gaining their Deſigns upon Men, ſeem, in Effect, to ſay, "Thoſe wiſe and noble Creatures, that are ſo much our Maſters by Deſign of Nature, Cuſtom, and God's Command, and ſo ſuperior in Abilities of Body and Mind, are yet weak, being to be enſnared by Fineries and Deceits." Men deſerve this ſcurvy Impoſition, who look no further than Appearances, and are governed by their Fancies, not by their Judgment and Underſtanding.

However, theſe Kinds of Frauds do commonly return upon the Artificers themſelves in the End to their great Diſappointment and Miſery. For, the People that are thus enſnared by theſe Deceits, do oftentimes awake from their deluſive Slumbers, and fall into a ſtrange

As it is no easy Matter for other People to decide in this Case, it more than ordinarily concerns Wives themstrange and incurable Aversion to such as have so cheated them, and use them as Ammon abused Tamar, "whose Hatred wherewith he hated her, was greater than the Love wherewith he loved her."

It is very plain, that the Qualities which should recommend People to one another, who are to live always together, should be such as will last and continue with them; not such as may please them only for a little while, but such as will bear Deliberation before, and a satisfactory Reflection afterwards; such as will not only recommend them, at first, to Favour and Good-liking: but such as will also keep them in Esteem all their Lives long: This is the likeliest Way to make their Condition happy.

Now these good Qualities are not the beautifying and adorning themselves only with Gold and Pearls, and plaited Hair, the dressing loosely and wantonly, the devoting the greatest Part of their Time, and most of their Estate, to the setting themselves out, to all Appearance, much above their Fortunes, and their Qualities.

These things will commend them to neither good, nor wise, nor sober People; but such good Qualities and Virtues as the Scriptures describe and enjoin them, and will recommend them to the Favour both of God and Man.

The Lacedemonians prohibited any but common Women the costly and sumptuous Cloaths. This was looked upon as a Mark to distinguish such infamous People by. But the Ladies of Reputation desired to be known by their Modesty and shining Virtues.

All Kind of Painting, artificial Garnishing, and Colouring of Hair, was forbidden also among the Spartans. Painting is highly pernicious. It is, therefore, no small Wonder to see how Women, that are so mightily fond of their Beauty, can use so much Art to anticipate its Ruin. See No. 41, of the Spectator.

Serm. CCCLXXII.

themſelves, who dreſs to make themſelves amiable and comely, to aſk their own Hearts ſeriouſly what they deſire that Grace and Comlineſs for, and what Uſe they deſign to make of People's Admiration; and alſo how far it is conſiſtent with their Circumſtances and Abilities, and the Time they can afford from their more ſerious, as well as common domeſtick Concerns, thus nicely and ſuperbly to decorate their Perſons; and, according as theſe are better or worſe, ſo will their adorning themſelves, be more or leſs innocent in the Sight of God. (*)

(*) Altho the above Rules are moſt eſpecially directed, and relate to Wives; yet all other Women are concerned, as well as they, in theſe Injunctions; all that are capable of offending againſt Rules, are capable of obſerving them in greater Degrees, or leſs, and are, therefore, ſo far concerned in them. And ſince the main Deſign of the Apoſtles, either in this, or in parallel Texts, is to make Women good Wives and good Chriſtians, the Obſervance of their Rules is ſure to make them good Chriſtians, and ſo fit and prepare them, to be good Wives, againſt they come to that Eſtate. Yea,

And Men are alſo concerned in them. Indeed, if they tranſgreſs in any of theſe Particulars, they are, doubtleſs, ſo much more to blame than Women, by how much they account themſelves the more reaſonable and ſuperior of the two.

Parcunt ſpirit Mihirum cum Sapientiâ Forma: Neglecta Decoris Cura plus placet; at Hoc ipſum, quòd non ornatum, ornatius eſt.

Ἠθεσιν ἁρμοζει γυνη, οὐ δε χρωσιν.

Manners, and not Dreſs, are the Ornaments of a Woman.

See Vol. iii. Page 16—36.

Sermon

SERMON CCCLXXIII.

On the same Subject.
Duties, continued.

Eph. v. 33. "And the Wife see that she reverence "her Husband."

The Particulars we have already considered in Reference to the Duty of Wives, were Fidelity and Assistance, Obedience and Submission, Humility and Meekness, Prudence and Discretion: – The latter of these we have considered as to Dress and Appearance; we now, therefore, proceed to that other Acceptation of it, as already mentioned, – Propriety of Conduct.

Nothing is in Reality so unsuitable to the Dignity, and so unbecoming the Character of a good and virtuous Wife as that indiscreet Carelessness and Levity of Behaviour, which has of late Years crept-in among us. (*) The Taste for Pleasure and Diversions is grown

(*) *Profuga non sinit pervenire Famina Census,*
At velut exhausta redivivus pullulat Arca
Nummus, et e plena semper tollatur Acervo;
Non quicquam reputat quanti sibi Gaudia constant.

—— Women

grown ſo univerſal, that Family-Decency & Decorum alſo are generally neglected. The Old and the Young, the Married and the Single, are ſo blended together in the general Maſs of Folly; the Carriage, Manners and Behaviour of all are ſo equally gay and diſſolute, that They ſet the Example of Vice, whoſe Duty it is to keep others from it; and ſcarce any thing is left to diſtinguiſh the Matron from her Daughter, but the Wrinkles which ſhe cannot hide, and the Years which ſhe cannot conceal. (*) When

—— Women-kind never know a Mean,
Down to the Dregs their ſinking Fortunes drain,
Hourly they give, and ſpend, and waſte, and wear,
And think no Pleaſure can be bought too dear.

There was a Time when the Reſervedneſs & Modeſty of Women exempted them from many conſiderable Privileges which they now enjoy; when that unbounded Freedom of Converſe, which the preſent Age allows, was held inconſiſtent with Female Delicacy; when not the gay Companion, nor the lively Viſitant, but the good and prudent Wife, were eſteemed the beſt of Characters.

It would become thoſe therefore, who have introduced and encouraged this Change of Manners, to conſider whether the Pleaſures have not interfered with Buſineſs, and the Duties of Life ſacrificed to the Impertinencies of it; whether the Matrons of former Ages were not, at leaſt, as modeſt, if not ſo well-bred, as thoſe who come after them; and whether, what the Sex hath gained in Politeneſs it hath not loſt in Virtue.

(*) *Ecce Anus in mediis reſidens annoſa Puellis,*
O Mater Filiâ pulchrâ pulchrior!

There

When One Sex thus forgets Station, Rank and Circumſtances,

There is ſomething in Habit and Carriage peculiarly decent, proper, and becoming to every Age, as well as Quality, which ought to be obſerved. The Cuſtoms of all wiſe and civilized Nations, in Conformity to Nature and good Reaſon, made and required a Difference in them, betwixt the Old and the Young, and ſet a Mark of Lightneſs upon ſuch as would not ſeem to know when they grow old.

Such Conduct argues a Mind too intent upon the inconſiderable Trifles of this World, and thoughtleſs of the momentous Concerns of the next. The older People grow, the more they ſhould ſee the Emptineſs and Vanity of all the things they heretofore delighted in. Age and Experience ſhould convince them that ſuch things are not Entertainments for conſidering Minds. Though the Giddineſs and Thoughtleſſneſs of Youth, the Cuſtoms of the Times, and the Converſation of the Neighbourhood may excuſe ſome vain Amuſements; yet another Age requires another Way of Living: It is Time to look a little forward, and to think of putting-off the Body itſelf; but before that, all the Mind's vain and corrupt Affections, all its Follies, Weakneſſes, and Failings, amongſt which, certainly, the ardent and ſolicitous Concern for Habit and Attire, Paſtime and Pleaſure, may well be reckoned: and therefore, for People, well-ſtricken in Years, to mind theſe vain Matters, is to forget the Rules of Decency, and to neglect the Warning both of God and Nature. Not to add, that this Behaviour gives no ſmall Ground to ſuſpect, that they want thoſe true and real Ornaments and Beauties, which adorn the Souls, and render moſt agreeable the Converſation of good Women, even "the hidden Man of the Heart, in that which is not corruptible, the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit; which, in the Sight of God, is of great Price."

There is nothing that wears out a fine Face like the Vigils of a Card-Table, & thoſe cutting Paſſions which naturally attend them. Haggard Looks and pale Complexions are the natural Indications of Female Gameſters. See the Diſcourſe on Gaming, in this Work.

Serm. CCCLXXIII.

cumſtances, can we be ſurprized to find the other unwilling to remember it? when Women no longer behave themſelves as Wives, do they deſire, or can they expect to be treated as ſuch? whilſt there is a Deſire in every Geſture, Word, and Action to pleaſe all indiſcriminately, can we ſuppoſe there is a ſtrong or powerful Attachment to any Individual? – Let thoſe, therefore, who follow a giddy thoughtleſs Multitude, thro the perpetual Round of faſhionable Follies, remember, that Amuſement is no longer innocent, when it interferes with Duty.

Women, as well as Men, are bound by the Religion of Chriſt, not only to avoid Vice, but alſo the Appearance of it, that they may not be cenſured as guilty, where they never meant any Criminality. (*) The prudent Wife will conſider the Honour of her Huſband as a precious Jewel entruſted to her Care, which it

(*) As ſome Women loſe their Reputation rather for Want of Diſcretion, than for Want of Virtue; ſo Others preſerve theirs by Diſcretion only: and doubtleſs, He is the happier Owner who has a Wife wiſe enough to hide her real Defects; than he, that being innocent, does, by her light ridiculous Carriage, make the baſe Symptoms appear in the Eye of the World. "As a Jewel of Gold in a Swine's Snout, ſo is a fair Woman without Diſcretion."

Pone Seram, cohibe; ſed quis cuſtodiet ipſos
Cuſtodes? ——— ———

"Women generally take greater Care of their Reputation, than Men of their's, why then do we count them the *weaker* Sex?

it is her Duty to preſerve free from every Blemiſh that might diminiſh its Luſtre or impair its Beauty.

But further, – Reſpect and Reverence. As the Huſband is the Head of the Wife, and her Superior by God's Appointment, "ſhe ought to reverence him with Fear;" not a ſervile and ſlaviſh, but an awful and loving Fear. She ſhould endeavour to frame her Affections and outward Behaviour agreeable to the Inclinations of her Huſband; to rejoice when he is pleaſed, and to be uneaſy when he is offended.

The Reverence here required is not that obſequious ſlaviſh Kind of Submiſſion, which oriental Polygamiſts haughtily demand of the Women of their Haram, who "are afraid with no ſmall Amazement." But a Kind of Reſpect which the Piety and good Senſe of the Wife will teach her is due to the Rank her Huſband holds in the Creation; and which her good Nature, and the tender Affection ſhe feels for him, will diſpoſe her to pay him. A Tribute not exacted on his Part, but cheerfully rendered on hers; He remembering that "the Man is by the Woman," and She that "the Woman was created for the Man." That Underſtanding, Sagacity, and Knowledge of the World in which the Huſband, "who is the Head of the Woman," is ſuppoſed to excel; and that Strength, Reſolution, and Firmneſs of Mind with which Providence has endowed

him for the Purpoſe eſpecially of defending the Rights and promoting the Intereſts of his Family, juſtly entitle him to her Reverence and Obedience. She will therefore "be in Subjection to her Huſband, even as "Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord;" and "ſubmit herſelf unto him, as unto the Lord," and "as it is fit in the Lord." Nor will he forget that, as it is her Duty to yield to his Opinion in all thoſe Matters eſpecially on which the Qualities juſt mentioned enable him to determine better than her, ſo there are Queſtions which it will be his Intereſt and Prudence to ſubmit to her Deciſion: for the ſame Apoſtle who has admoniſhed "Wives to ſubmit themſelves to their own Huſbands," has alſo exhorted us all "to ſubmit ourſelves one to another in the Fear of God."

That Reverence, then, which the Text requires, is founded in Reaſon and Affection, and will expreſs itſelf in various Ways; which will not fail to contribute greatly to their mutual Welfare and Happineſs. His Character for Piety, Good-Senſe, and Prudence, ſhe will on every Occaſion endeavour to place in ſuch a Point of Light, as to attract the Regards of all her Acquaintance, and more eſpecially of his Children and Servants, not affecting to outſhine him in any of theſe Excellencies. Fond of viewing him through the flattering, but commendable Medium of Conjugal Partiality,

tiality, his Virtues will magnify in her tender Eye, and his Imperfections recede from her View. His Temper ſhe will aſſiduouſly conſult, and by yielding to his Will, in Inſtances where Conſcience is not concerned, ſhe will gain an Aſcendency over him, which ſhe will ſecurely enjoy without ſeeming to poſſeſs it. Eſteem and Affection will be ſo blended in her Breaſt, that her ſweet and reſpectful Demeanour towards him in her Houſe, & among all her Connections, will ſtrike every Obſerver as the ſoft Impulſe of Nature, rather than the Reſult of ſtudied Prudence. In ſhort, a Reverence thus flowing from Love, and expreſſing itſelf in Inſtances too numerous to be here recited, will not fail to ſecure to her in Return the Tribute of Admiration and Eſteem, as well as Affection and Delight.

Whether any who called themſelves Chriſtians in the early Age of the Church, were defective in the Duty here enjoined, and that might give Occaſion to the Mode of Expreſſion uſed in the Text, "Let the Wife ſee that ſhe reverence her Huſband," is not for me to ſay; it is, however, plain from the general Tenor of the Apoſtle's Reaſoning in this Context, that he meant rather to allure each Party to their Duty by the gentle Perſuaſions of Affection and Intereſt, than to impel them to it by the ſtern Dictates of Authority.

An affectionate, tender Love, and kind Forbear-

ance and Complacency, (in ſome Meaſure, more neceſſary on the Part of the Wife, than of the Huſband) comes now to be conſidered.

Thoſe who have the Management and Direction of Affairs, whatever Station, Buſineſs, or Profeſſion they are engaged in, muſt meet with various Misfortunes and Diſappointments: the Ways of Life are, at beſt, but uneven; and, too well we know, that in an evil and corrupt World, the beſt Intentions and the moſt honeſt Endeavours of the beſt Men may miſcarry: and, Accidents, which we are every Day liable to, will ſour the ſweeteſt Diſpoſitions, throw a Gloom over the cheerfulleſt Face, and fill the firmeſt Heart with Anguiſh and Diſquiet.

The good Wife, therefore, conſidering the Wounds of Adverſity which pain him, as received in her Service; and the Diſquietude which he feels, as endured for her Sake, will endeavour, by every poſſible Means of kind and gentle Perſuaſion, to calm his Sorrows, and ſooth his Affliction. Indeed, The greater his Sorrows are; the greater ſhould be her Care to remove them; her Tenderneſs ſhould increaſe in Proportion to his Diſquietude: her Forbearance, to his Warmth: her Complacency, to his Uneaſineſs: her Smiles are to make amends for the Frowns of the World; and her Love and Kindneſs to compenſate for the Hatred and

In-

Ingratitude he meets in it; as conſcious, that every thing which promotes his Happineſs, muſt, in the End, contribute to her own.

And to this Purpoſe, God hath endowed the other Sex, not only with more native Tenderneſs, but likewiſe with a certain Vivacity and Gaiety of Heart that bears up againſt Misfortunes; or, at leaſt, is not ſo long caſt down under them, as Men uſually are. Their Spirits are more light and volatile, and their Imagination more ſprightly; and this prompts them to think and ſpeak a thouſand agreeable things, which would never enter into the heavy Heart of an anxious and thoughtful Huſband; and by that Means inſpires a Cheerfulneſs which is not natural to him, and is a wonderful Relief to the Toils of Life: and, doubtleſs, this is one great Reaſon, why God hath endowed the other Sex with a greater Quickneſs and Readineſs of Speech upon common Occurrences, that the Huſband, upon his Return into his Houſe from the Cares and Labours of the Day, might be entertained with the diverting Accounts of his Family-affairs, and with agreeable Inquiries into his own Conduct; not without pleaſing and proper Reflections upon both. And therefore that Diſpoſition to Diſcourſe, which melancholy and moroſe Huſbands are wont to cenſure as troubleſome and impertinent in their Wives, is, in

Truth, an Inſtinct moſt wiſely and graciouſly appointed of God, for the Relief and Joy of the conjugal State; and Life would (in endleſs Inſtances) be an inſupportable Load without it.

What therefore Women are concerned to do upon this Account, is, not to ſpeak leſs than they are naturally inclined to do, but to endeavour to ſpeak better than the Generality of them are taught, or are wont to do. It is not their Buſineſs to check the Inſtinct that God hath endowed them with, but to direct it, and make it anſwer its true End, the Relief and Delight of their Huſbands and their Houſehold; whereas, when it is diverted from its right End, and degenerates either into impertinent Garrulity, or into Brawling and Abuſe, it forms one or other of the moſt hateful and unbecoming Characters in Life. (*) And therefore Solomon rightly obſerves that "it is better to dwell in a Corner of the Houſe-top, than with a brawling Woman in a wide Houſe." That is, it is better to be confined to one Spot on the Top of a Houſe, expoſed to all the Injuries of the Weather, than enjoying all the Advantages of Shade and Shelter, to be expoſed to the Aſſaults of a boiſterous Tongue. And again, "It is better to dwell in the Wilderneſs, than with a contentious

(*) Imperious, clamorous, and turbulent Women are a Torment to themſelves and their Huſbands.

ous and angry Woman;" that is, it is better to be baniſhed the Society of Mankind, than be confined to ſuch Society as that.

Now there are two things required of Women, in Order to make their Converſation agreeable; the firſt is, "the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit," without which no other Ornament will become them. And this, the Apoſtle aſſures us, "is, in the Sight of God, of high Price:" nor is it leſs ſo in the Eyes of Men. The next is, that they endeavour to furniſh their Minds with a Store of uſeful Obſervations, for the Conduct of Life, from a competent Knowledge of the Manners and Hiſtory of the World, a thorough Acquaintance with the holy Scriptures, a particular exact Study of their Huſband's Inclinations and Intereſt, and a careful Inquiry into the Œconomy and good Government of their Family; and this, joined to a Fund of Virtue and good Humour, will rightly direct their natural Inſtinct, and make their Converſation equally agreeable and uſeful; will give them new and lovelier Charms, when thoſe of Youth and Beauty are long ſince waſted and decayed.

And here I cannot but reflect with Concern, upon the unhappy Methods which have obtained in the World in Relation to the Education of Women. One of the firſt things that takes Poſſeſſion of their

Minds, is, the Hopes of a Huſband; but how to become a faithful Friend, and an agreeable Companion in the married State, are Leſſons rarely taught, and more rarely learnt. Superficial and ſhewy Accompliſhments are indeed inculcated with ſufficient Care; but how to acquire ſolid Worth and uſeful Knowledge makes, for the moſt Part, but a ſmall Part of parental Solicitude. By this Means a Woman becomes every thing to a Huſband, but what ſhe ſhould be; a ſocial Friend, and an uſeful Aſſiſtant. Forgetting that the Intereſt of all Men makes that one eſſential Part of the Character of a good Wife, laid down by Solomon, that "ſhe openeth her Mouth with Wiſdom, and in her Tongue is the Law of Kindneſs." That is, as ſhe hath acquired Habits of Prudence and Diſcretion from Study and Obſervation, ſo ſhe hath made it a fixed Rule to herſelf, not to be imperious or preſuming upon her Knowledge; but rather to make it a Reaſon of conſtant Cheerfulneſs and good Humour, together with a ready, a rational, and an affectionate Aſſiſtance in every Exigency, and on every Occaſion; "in her Tongue is the Law of Kindneſs." And ſurely Wiſdom, ſo ſeaſoned and ſweetened, is amiable and delightful beyond Expreſſion. And therefore this Character is crowned by Solomon with that noble Encomium, "many Daughters have done virtuouſly, but

thou

thou excellest them all." That is, many other Women may be virtuous; but Virtue thus recommended, Virtue that is adorned with all the Graces of Prudence and good Humour, is Virtue in its highest and loveliest Perfection; "thou excellest them all." And again, "Favour is deceitful, and Beauty is vain; but a Woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised." That is, the Regard that ariseth from Colour and Complexion is transient and unsteady; Beauty is deceitful; a fair Face may cover a deformed Mind, and is at best a short and uncertain Recommendation; but Piety and Virtue are sure and lasting Perfections, which will always entitle the Woman that is blessed with them to lasting Veneration and Esteem.

But, All those Branches of Conjugal Duty, as here enumerated, must proceed from that great Source of Happiness, true and genuine Affection. And the Reason for this is, because "they are one Flesh."

And in Truth they are joined together upon Terms of as entire and thorough a Communion, as if they were one Soul, and one Body: and secondly, because their Interests are in all Respects perfectly the same; which is the truest Foundation of Friendship.

The Husband's Happiness naturally tends to make the Wife happy at the same Time; and his Misery, to make her miserable; his Riches make her rich; and his

Poverty makes her poor. It is always their Intereſt to wiſh and avoid, to deſire and to deteſt, the ſame things; and ſurely to have the very ſame Intereſt, the ſame Deſires and Averſions, to be happy in each other's Happineſs, and miſerable in each other's Miſery, are the ſtrongeſt Engagements, and the ſureſt Foundations of entire Friendſhip, and perfect Affection, that can poſſibly be imagined.

Love is the goodly Cement of Society, it is a ready Spring of good Offices to all Men; even the hardeſt Yoke becomes eaſy, and the moſt difficult Taſk is readily undertaken to oblidge our Friend. From the Want of this, and from the Loſs of Affection it is, that flow all thoſe Cares and Jealouſies, all thoſe Troubles and Animoſities, which break the Bands of Nuptial Harmony, and poiſon the Fountain of domeſtic Happineſs.

Without this, indeed, Fidelity hath no proper Support to reſt upon; Prudence, no End to promote; Tenderneſs and Complacency no Object to employ themſelves in the Service of; — Whereas, on the other hand, where This is, ſcarce any thing elſe can be wanted; — It improves the Charms of Beauty where it is, and ſupplies the Place where it is not; it commands Reſpect and Obedience from the obſtinate and perverſe, Conſtancy from the moſt inconſtant, and Diſcretion

erection from the moſt indiſcreet; It poliſhes the indelicate, ſoftens the rude, and humbles the proud and haughty; It adds, in ſhort, to the Bloom of Youth, Health and Plenty; and gives Life, Joy and Pleaſure even to Old-age, Sickneſs, and Adverſity.

Laſtly, The good Wife will be pious. — Religion is the great Bond which links together, and unites every Virtue; Piety will enſure Fidelity, enforce Obedience, encourage Prudence, increaſe Tenderneſs, and double Affection.

When the Duty to a Huſband is conſidered, as it ought to be, as a Duty to God alſo, THEN, and THEN ONLY, will it be duly and punctually performed. (*)

In a Word — and as Encouragement to the whole, the good Wife, at the ſame Time that ſhe makes herſelf

(*) "A good Wife (ſays Solomon) is a good Portion, and there is nothing of ſo much Worth as a Mind well inſtructed."

Many of the Misfortunes in Families ariſe from the trifling Way Women have in ſpending their Time, and gratifying only their Eyes and Ears, inſtead of their Reaſon and Underſtanding.

Women, therefore, ſhould be acquainted, that no Beauty hath any Charms, but the inward One of the Mind; and that a Gracefulneſs in their Manners is much more engaging than that of their Perſons. — That Meekneſs and Modeſty are the true and laſting Ornaments; for the that has theſe, is qualified as ſhe ought to be, for the Management of a Family, for the Education of Children, for an Affection to her Huſband, and ſubmitting to a prudent Way of living. Theſe only are the Charms that render Wives valuable, and give them the beſt Title to our Reſpect. Serm. 373.

ſelf amiable in the Sight of Man, recommends herſelf to the Favour and Protection of God; if her Huſband is inſenſible of her Affection, God will not be ſo; if he forgetteth, God will remember.

As a good and pious Chriſtian, therefore, ſhe will look up to the great Diſpenſer and Diſpoſer of all things, as to the Huſband of the Widow, and Father of the Fatherleſs, and entreat the Lord for him, beſeeching his Divine Favour and Aſſiſtance in this, and every other her religious and moral Duty, well-ſatisfied, that if ſhe duly and punctually diſcharges her ſeveral Offices and Relations in this Life, ſhe will be bleſſed and rewarded for it in another. "Fear not, thou ſhalt not be aſhamed; neither be thou confounded, for thy Maker is thy Huſband, the Lord of Hoſts is his Name."

Having thus explained the Duties recommended in the Text, we might proceed to enforce them by a great Variety of Arguments — Arguments from Nature, Reaſon, Intereſt, the Good of Society, the Conſent of the wiſeſt and beſt of Men, ſtriking Examples held up to our View in the Scriptures, and the poſitive Command of God. But waving theſe, I ſhall confine myſelf, in this Caſe, (as we have already done, in our Enforcement of the Duty of Huſbands,) to that Argument on which the Apoſtle ſo largely and ſo happily inſiſts

inſiſts in this Context, and which is addreſſed to all the noble Paſſions, and to all generous Feelings of a truly Chriſtian Heart; [viz.] the Relation ſubſiſting between our Saviour and his Church. "Wives, ſubmit yourſelves unto your own Huſbands, as unto the Lord. For the Huſband is the Head of the Wife, even as Chriſt is the Head of the Church, and He is the Saviour of the Body. Therefore, as the Church is ſubject unto Chriſt, ſo let the Wives be to their own Huſbands, in every thing."

From the Duty which Chriſtians readily acknowledge they owe to the divine Saviour, in Return for his Love to them, there ariſes a powerful Argument, if ſuch be needful, to perſuade the Wife to reverence her Huſband, in Return for the Love he bears towards her.

Attention, Confidence, Submiſſion, and Obedience, are Duties which, doubtleſs, Chriſt may juſtly challenge of us, ſince he hath loved us, and redeemed us unto God by his Blood. Eſpouſed as we are to him, we are no more our own, but his. He is our Head, he is our Saviour, and we are One with him. And what is his Language to us? It is this, "Hearken, O Daughter, and conſider, and incline thine Ear; forget alſo thine own People, and thy Father's Houſe: ſo ſhall the King greatly deſire thy Beauty: for he is thy

Lord, and worſhip thou him." The Reaſonableneſs of all this every Individual that compoſes the Church of Chriſt readily admits; and Affection ſweetly inclines them to that Submiſſion which Duty and Intereſt demand of them.

Ought not then the Wife, remembering that ſhe holds the ſame Relation to her Huſband which the Church ſtands-in to Chriſt, to conduct herſelf towards him in a ſimilar Manner? Since he is her Friend, her Guardian, her Head, her Self; ſince he loves her with a tender, prevailing and conſtant Affection; and is willing to endure any Hardſhips and Sufferings for her Sake; ought ſhe not in Return to love him, to repoſe an entire Confidence in him, to pay a reſpectful Deference to his Judgment and Will in all things, and to ſubmit herſelf unto him as unto the Lord? She ought. And to this Sentiment the Heart, as well as the Hand, of every virtuous and pious Wife, will cheerfully ſubſcribe. — Upon the Whole,

The Duties on the Man's Part, (we have ſeen) are Love, Fidelity, and Support; but above all, Fidelity, foraſmuch as Infidelity, for the moſt Part, deſtroys the other two Duties, and is the common Cauſe of Poverty, as well as Contention and Hatred. And therefore it is, that Solomon adviſes them "to remove far from the ſtrange Woman, leſt Strangers be filled with

with their Wealth: and they mourn at the laſt when their Fleſh and their Body are conſumed." And again, "Drink Waters out of thine own Ciſtern: let thy Fountain be bleſſed, and rejoice thou with the Wife of thy Youth; let her be as the loving Hind, and pleaſant Roe; let her Breaſt ſatisfy thee at all Times, and be thou raviſhed always with her Love. And why wilt thou, my Son, be raviſhed with a ſtrange Woman, and embrace the Boſom of a Stranger? for the Ways of Man are before the Eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his Goings; his own Iniquities ſhall take the Wicked himſelf, and he ſhall be loaden with the Cords of his own Sins." Remember the Apoſtle's Admonition, that as "the Wife hath no Power over her own Body, but the Huſband," ſo likewiſe "the Huſband hath no Power over his own Body, but the Wife." Nay, altho your Wives had not any Power over your Bodies, yet would you have no right to abuſe and proſtitute them to the Purpoſes of Vice. "What, know ye not, that your Bodies are the Members of Chriſt? will ye then take the Members of Chriſt, and make them the Members of an Harlot? God forbid. What, know ye not, that your Body is the Temple of the Holy Ghoſt, which is in you, which you have of God; and ye are not your own? for ye are bought

with a Price; therefore glorify God in your Body, and in your Spirit, which are God's."

On the other Hand, let the Woman always remember, not only to be faithful to her Husband, but agreeable, and obſervant; not querulous, not contentious; but diligent in the Care of her Family, and the Education of her Children, in the Nurture and Fear of the Lord; for this is the Woman's juſteſt and higheſt Praiſe, both in the Sight of God and Man! "Whoſe Adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the Hair, and wearing of Gold, and putting on gorgeous Apparel; but let it be the hidden Man of the Heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which, in the Sight God, is of great Price:" deſpiſing the ſhewy Outſide of things, the paltry, the periſhing Vanities and Follies of this World, and being clothed upon, in their ſtead, with the ſilent, the laſting, the invaluable Ornaments of Modeſty, and Humility, and Piety, which are of eternal Excellency! Ornaments of irreſiſtible Charms, even in the Eyes of Men, as well as ineſtimable Value in the Sight of God.

It may be preſumed from what has been ſaid, indeed it would be an unkind Reflection to admit a Doubt of it, that all who have drank into the generous and noble Spirit of the Goſpel, whatever may be the

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Temper and Demeanour of others, will readily fall in with the Duties we have been recommending. — In Obedience to the mild and gentle Authority of Jesus Christ their Saviour and King, as well as to the Dictates of their own Reason, and the Feelings of their own Breasts; "every such Husband in particular will so love his Wife even as himself, and every such Wife will see that she affectionately reverence her Husband."

I shall Close the Whole with the following just Remarks on, and Characters of, a good Wife.

"Who (saith Solomon) can find a virtuous Woman? her Price is above Rubies. The Heart of her Husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of Spoil. She will do him good and not evil, all the Days of her Life — She openeth her Mouth with Wisdom, and in her Tongue is the Law of Kindness: She looketh well to the Ways of her Household, and eateth not the Bread of Idleness; her Children rise up and call her blessed: her Husband also, and he praiseth her." Again,

"Who is she that winneth the Heart of Man, that subdueth him to Love, and reigneth in his Breast? Lo, yonder she walketh in Maiden Sweetness, with Innocence in her Mind, and Modesty on her Cheek. Her Hand seeketh Employment, her Foot delighteth not in gadding abroad. (Serm. 373.) "She

"She is clothed with Neatneſs, ſhe is fed with Temperance, Humility and Meekneſs are as a Crown of Glory circling her Head. On her Tongue dwelleth Muſick, the Sweetneſs of Honey floweth from her Lips. Decency is in all her Words, and in her Anſwers are Mildneſs and Truth.

"Submiſſion and Obedience are the Leſſons of her Life, and Peace and Happineſs are her Reward.

"Before her Steps walketh Prudence, and Virtue attendeth at her Right-hand. Her Eye ſpeaketh Softneſs and Love; but Diſcretion with a Sceptre ſitteth on her Brow.

"The Tongue of the licentious is dumb in her Preſence; the Awe of her Virtue keepeth him ſilent.

"When Scandal is buſy, and the Fame of her Neighbour is toſſed from Tongue to Tongue; if Charity and Good-nature open not her Mouth, the Finger of Silence reſteth on her Lip.

"Her Breaſt is the Manſion of Goodneſs; and therefore ſhe ſuſpecteth no Evil in others. Happy is the Man that maketh her his Wife; happy the Child that ſhall call her Mother.

"She preſideth in the Houſe, and there is Peace; ſhe commandeth with Judgment, and is obeyed.

"She ariſeth in the Morning, ſhe conſiders her Affairs, and appointeth to every one their proper Buſi-

neſs.

neſs. The Care of her Family is her whole Delight, to that alone ſhe applies her Study; and Elegance with Frugality is ſeen in her Manſions.

"The Prudence of her Management is an Honour to her Huſband, and he heareth her Praiſe with ſecret Delight.

"She informeth the Minds of her Children with Wiſdom, ſhe faſhioneth their Manners from the Example of her own Goodneſs. The Word of her Mouth is the Law of their Youth, the Motion of her Eye commandeth their Obedience.

"She ſpeaketh, and her Servants fly; ſhe pointeth with her Finger, and the thing is done: for the Law of Love is in their Hearts, and her Kindneſs addeth Wings to their Feet.

"In Proſperity ſhe is not puffed up, in Adverſity ſhe healeth the Wounds of Fortune with Patience: the Troubles of her Huſband are alleviated by her Counſels and ſweetned by her Endearments; he poureth his Heart in her Boſom, and receiveth Comfort."

"Happy is the Man that hath made her his Wife; happy the Child that calleth her Mother." (*)

(*) "A virtuous Woman is a Crown to her Huſband; but ſhe that maketh aſhamed, is as Rottenneſs to his Bones."

See the Diſcourſes on Family-Peace and Family-Friendſhip, in this Work, Vol. ix. and x.

Sermon

SERMON CCCLXXIV.

The Duty of Parents.

Ephe. vi. 4. "Fathers, provoke not your Children "to Wrath; but bring them up in the Nurture "and Admonition of the Lord."

As there is nothing wherein the Truth and Power of Godlineſs, and the Life of Religion, is more concerned, than in a conſcientious Performance of relative Duties, becauſe they daily occur; ſo there is no Subject more ungrateful to Men, than to be reminded of theſe Duties, and reproved for the Neglect of them: however, the frequent Occaſion we have to practiſe them, renders it neceſſary to conſider how to perform them.

The Words before us relate to Parents, in Regard of their Children; and there is the leſs need to enlarge here, becauſe Parents have not only Underſtanding to know their Duty, but alſo ſtrong Affections to prompt them to do it; and yet, through various Cauſes, too numerous to be mentioned here, this Buſineſs is wholly neglected by ſome, and very ill managed by moſt. Nor

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can it be enough lamented, that too many, of whom nevertheleſs we would, in Charity, hope better things, are ſadly defective in this Point. What we propoſe therefore is, in ſome following Diſcourſes, to lay down the Duty of Parents to their Children, in all its Parts: and enforce it with ſuitable Arguments.

"Fathers, provoke not your Children to Wrath; but bring them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord." — Which Words contain both the negative and poſitive Parts of the Parent's Duty. I ſhall ſpeak to them ſeparately. — And,

Firſt, Parents are not to provoke their Children to Wrath.

Children may be "provoked to Wrath" by the Severity and Inhumanity of their Parents; by their Weakneſs and Indulgence; by their Partiality; and by their Injuſtice or Impiety. — And,

Firſt, Children may be "provoked to Wrath," by the Severity and Inhumanity of their Parents. This Argument we have already evinced. (*) Therefore,

2dly, Children may be "provoked to Wrath" by the contrary Extreme of Weakneſs and Indulgence — a more dangerous, and certainly a much more frequent Error in Parents than the former.

This, however ill calculated it may ſeem for ſuch a Purpoſe, may, in the End, as juſtly and as inevitably

(*) Vol ix. Page 168, &c. (Serm. 374) "provoke

"provoke Children to Wrath," as the oppoſite Extreme of Harſhneſs and Severity.

The various Paſſions and Affections of human Nature begin very early to exert and diſplay themſelves, and, if they are not properly reſtrained and directed, will of Neceſſity have a fatal and unconquerable Influence over the whole Tenor of our Lives; – If we give up the Reins to Appetite at an Age, when Reaſon is too weak to guide them, and ſuffer the Will to rule with deſpotic Sway, uncontrouled by Judgment, and unawed by parental Authority, every Vice will gain Strength daily by Habit, and every Propenſity to Evil take ſuch deep Root in the Soul, as never to be extirpated; if the Child is not corrected, it is moſt probable that the Man will not be virtuous; and if the Child is always complied-with, the Man will always be unhappy. (*) How

(*) *Nimia Lenitas et Indulgentia Animum ad deteriorem Partem plerumquè applicat. Deteriores omnes ſumus Licentiâ. Qui Pater verus eſt, diligit; et qui diligit, non quæ mulceant, ſed quæ prosint, cogitat. Lenitas ei Filio datur, qui Indulgentiâ Salutem Filii negligit; ille demùm durus eſt Pater, ità Frons mitiſſima. — Ut Simus, Catuli ſcit Complexu necat; ità, nonnulli Parentes immodico in Liberos Affectu et Indulgentiâ corrumpunt eos. Nocet Indulgentia Matrum. Gallina Filios alba.—Ut ſatum quiſque ſuum vult eſſe, ità eſt.—Fortiùs utere Loris.*

——— ——— ——— Dura
Exerce Imperia, et Ramos compeſce fluentes.
——— ——— Peragit ſolennia Poteſtas
Quod tranquilla negat. ——— ———

See Knox's Eſſays, No. 153, On parental Indulgence, and No. 123, of the Spectator.

How often indeed, do Children live to lament that Fondneſs which was the Source of their Guilt, and to condemn that Indulgence which was the Foundation of their Miſery?

Parents therefore, are to correct their Children in their Faults. This is a Duty wherein they, from their great Fondneſs for their Children, are often exceedingly faulty: and yet in Truth, the Neglect of Correction is faulty, even upon the Score of Fondneſs; for true Tenderneſs and Love to Children ſhould oblige Parents to provide early and carefully, that they might be miſerable and afflicted as ſhort and as ſeldom, and happy as often and as long as poſſible. And the true Way to effect this, is to fix good Habits; and either to prevent or to root out evil Habits as early as poſſible. For this Reaſon, if Children are not to be won to Goodneſs by Kindneſs and Indulgence, (which we own is much more deſirable,) they are to be compelled to it by Severity and Diſcipline; and when they have once got a good Habit, it will, from that Moment, be eaſy to them. On the other hand, if they are not to be kept back from Evil by Exhortation and Advice, they are to be deterred from it by Threats and Puniſhment. — Indeed,

There needs nothing elſe to make a Man completely miſerable, but to let him, in the moſt dangerous Stage

of Life, carve out an Happineſs for himſelf, without any Check upon the Sallies of Youth. Thoſe to whom Parents have been over-indulgent, and perhaps could not have been otherwiſe, without proceeding to Extremities (never to be uſed but in deſperate Caſes) have been always the moſt liberal of their Cenſures and Invectives againſt them. It is a certain Sign, Men want Reſtraints, when they are impatient under any; too head-ſtrong to be governed by Authority, and too weak to be conducted by Reaſon. (*)

It is ſaid, indeed, of Adonijah, the Son of David, that "his Father had not diſpleaſed him at any Time, in ſaying, Why haſt thou done ſo?"

But, this is no Example for other Parents, unleſs their Children ſo behave themſelves, as not to need Check or Reproof. Solomon, who was, by far, wiſer than his Father, adviſes Parents never to regard the Cries, the Pain or Grief of their Children, under their Pu-

(*) Family-government is as neceſſary as a good Education; this ſhould commence with the Children when they are very young, immediately as Reaſon begins to dawn, that ſo a deep Impreſſion may be made on the Mind. — The good Example of the Parents is of the firſt Conſequence: next to this, Order and Regularity in all things in the Houſe; to this ſhould be added, the conſtant keeping up the Authority of the Parents, and yet an affectionate tender Manner of behaving to all the Children. If theſe things were ſtrictly attended to in Families, the World would ſoon ſee the great Benefit of ſuch Conduct in Parents.

Punishments, when there was just Occasion, or when they were in Danger of Miscarriage.

"He that spareth the Rod, hateth his Son; but he that loveth him, chasteneth him betimes." Again, "Chasten thy Son while there is Hope, and let not thy Soul spare for his crying." That is, chasten him early, while there is Hope of his Reformation; for if you let him go on in Vice, your Correction may come too late. "The Rod and Reproof give Wisdom; but a Child left to himself, bringeth his Mother to Shame." The Mother is here particularly mentioned, because Children are mostly ruined by the false and ill-judged Indulgence of the Mothers: nay, you ought to correct your Children early, as well for your own Ease, as for their Amendment: for besides the Pleasure of seeing your Children grow up in Goodness and Virtue; is it not a great Happiness to yourselves to be saved the Trouble, and Vexation, and Disquiet, of giving your Children frequent and repeated Correction, when they were grown headstrong in Vice? And therefore Solomon again most excellently advises, "Correct thy Son, and he shall give thee Rest: yea he shall give Delight unto thy Soul."

When Parents see their Children in Danger of falling into evil Courses, they are not to consider, whether what is proper to reclaim them, and prevent their Mi-

fery, will grieve or anger them; but to venture THAT, and do their Duty. They are to have Regard to what they intend ſhould, and what, in all Likelihood, will follow, [viz] Amendment; and not how it will be received from them.

They may herein look up to God, the Father of us all, "who chaſtens us, not merely for his Pleaſure, but for our Profit, that we may be Partakers of his Holineſs." And yet, — He underſtands and knows that "no Chaſtening for the preſent is joyous but grievous; nevertheleſs, afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable Fruits of Righteouſneſs to them that are exerciſed thereby."

The Good of the Children is what the Parent is to regard; and tho the Method of procuring that may ſtir-up all the wrathful Spirits of Children, yet is it not to be declined on that Account; the reaſonable Hopes of its yielding the Fruit of Righteouſneſs, Goodneſs and Amendment, afterwards, to them that are exerciſed thereby, will juſtify what they do. (*) But,

(*) It is not to be thought, that any Manner of Reſtraint, or Puniſhment, ſhould be, for the preſent, eaſy and well received; a Parent is not to look for this, nor to have any Regard to it; but he is ſo to order them, that upon Conſideration and Reflection, they may find, that all was well-intended towards them, that their Admonitions and Reproofs, Reſtraints and Puniſhments, were natural and moderate; ſuch as was proper for their Age, Condition & Offence; ſuch as were likely to effect Amendment, and prevent or cure an Evil;

But, perhaps, the Child is weak and ſickly, and therefore muſt not be corrected, for Fear of ſpoiling his Conſtitution. — This is the common Excuſe for ruining moſt Children; and it is as ſhameful and ill-grounded, as it is common: for the ſure Way of deſtroying the beſt Conſtitution, is by leaving it at the Mercy of peeviſh and ungovernable Diſpoſitions; by yielding it a Prey to all the unruly Paſſions, and Humours, and Appetites of a perverſe Mind: and therefore the only Way to preſerve a weak Conſtitution, is by

Evil; ſuch as other Parents, wiſe and tender, might make uſe of, on the like Occaſions; ſuch as Religion would adviſe and juſtify.

Such Nurture and Admonition, ſuch Inſtruction, and Reproof, and Chaſtiſement, as this, would look as if it came from the Lord; who never grieves us willingly, or for his Pleaſure, but thro Neceſſity, for our Amendment, and our laſting Good. Such Correction as this would ſecure the Honour and Reſpect, the Service and Obedience of Children to their Parents.

The Reception of any Argument depends, in a great Meaſure, upon the Way and Manner of propounding it. - If we can once convince the Party, that we deſign his Benefit, we have already gained a favourable Attention; and every thing we ſay will be conſidered: But, if we give him Cauſe to ſuſpect our Kindneſs, he will neglect, or coldly entertain, all we ſhall offer.

When young Perſons are convinced of the true Love and Kindneſs of their Parents (and it is very eaſy to convince them by gentle Uſage) they will bear, with Decency and Patience, a great many hard and unpleaſant things: Reproof and Admonition, nay, and even Puniſhments, will find Submiſſion and Obedience, when they can once come to think, it is in Order to their Good, or at leaſt deſigned for that Purpoſe.

by ſubduing the froward unruly Mind, that hurts and deſtroys it, to the Diſcipline of Reaſon and Virtue. Moreover, it ſhould be conſidered, that if this be not ſeaſonably and effectually done, the Diſeaſes and Ailments of headſtrong Children can neither have the Aid of proper Food or proper Phyſic to relieve them: and therefore all neceſſary Correction is to be early applied, even for the Intereſt of their Health and Quiet: although in Truth, if Correction were dangerous to ſuch a Conſtitution, it were infinitely better, that a perverſe Child ſhould actually die under it, than that he ſhould be ſuffered to become a Son of Perdition; to grow up into a Monſter of Vice and Iniquity, to plague his Parents and the World, and to gather to himſelf "Wrath againſt the Day of Wrath, and the Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God."

Not that no Difference is to be made in our Treatment of Children; ſome Children are of a robuſt, and others of a delicate Make. In the former Caſe, plain Food, ſo it be wholeſome; active Exertions ſo they do not exceed; and Chaſtiſements a little more rigorous than in the latter Inſtance, may be proper. Some Indulgences, with Reſpect to each of theſe Particulars, ſhould be allowed Children of a tender Conſtitution. If a ſtout hale Child is pampered with the Delicacies of Life, purely for the Sake of gratifying his Appetite,

excuſed

excuſed of this or that Exerciſe leſt it ſhould give him Pain, and for the ſame Reaſon allowed to eſcape Puniſhment, when he has richly deſerved it, both his Health and his Morals will ſuffer. How many Children have been ruined through the imprudent Management of indulgent Mothers.

Children, therefore, ſhould be treated according to their different Strength, Capacity, and Diſpoſition; for according to the Aſſertion of Solomon, reſpecting our different Treatment of the various Tempers and Diſpoſitions of Men, and our Succeſs in it, "a Word will enter more into a wiſe Man, than a hundred Stripes into the Back of a Fool." Theſe, therefore, we ſhould regard; and at no Time, thro' Indulgence, to let evil Habits grow upon them.

Though, after all, it muſt be acknowledged, that the beſt of Men, have ſometimes very undutiful and diſſolute Children. Aaron, Eli, and David, were miſerably diſappointed in the ſanguine Hopes they had formed of ſome, if not of all their Children. Let not, therefore, Parents ſo circumſtanced be unduly diſcouraged. Your Affliction is very great. Permit us to mingle our Tears with yours, and to adminiſter to you all the Comfort in our Power. It may be difficult to aſſuage your Grief; yet allow us, in the ſofteſt Language we can uſe, to remind you of the excellent

Men juſt referred to, and of their Patience under theſe trying Afflictions.

Nor would we forget to caution you againſt a Miſtake, which hath ſometimes greatly aggravated the Diſtreſs of Perſons in your Situation, we mean that of drawing an unfavourable Concluſion from Afflictions of this Sort, reſpecting their own State towards God. The Inſtances, juſt mentioned, are directly in Point to the Purpoſe of refuting this gloomy and totally groundleſs Apprehenſion. It is an indiſputable Fact, that ſome of the beſt of Men have had the worſt of Children. And as God cannot do wrong, ſo he means by theſe Diſpenſations to try your Faith and Patience, and to convince you in the End, as he did thoſe pious Men of old, that "he is very pitiful, and of tender Mercy." But,

In Juſtice to the Subject before us, we cannot forbear applying here, again, the Circumſtances, already mentioned, as contributing not a little to the Miſbehaviour of ſuch Children.

The Seeds of Depravity are deeply ſown in our Nature, and this, no Doubt, is the grand Source from whence all the Extravagancies of young People originate. But then there are other more immediate Cauſes and Occaſions of their Degeneracy, which all operate under this firſt great Cauſe.

Too

Too many pious Parents are guilty of fatal Miſtakes in the Manner of educating their Children. They are, (as in this and the former Inſtance obſerved,) either unreaſonably ſevere, or fooliſhly indulgent. In the former Caſe, by treating them with Rigour, they add Strength to thoſe Prejudices againſt ſerious Religion, which are too prevalent in every unrenewed Mind. And in the latter, by giving them their Way in every thing, they ſuffer their depraved Paſſions and vicious Inclinations to become too turbulent to admit of any Reſtraint. And what is the Conſequence? No other than might naturally be expected. Such unhappy Children, growing up into Life amidſt Wealth and Splendour, and having their youthful Imagination ſtruck with a thouſand enſnaring Objects around them, are ſuddenly precipitated into Temptation, and proceeding from one Failure in Conduct to another, are at length totally and irrecoverably ruined. Such ſad Inſtances as theſe of parental Imprudence, and filial Profligacy, cannot be enough lamented. But then, however Parents may fail in their Duty, let not,

Young People excuſe themſelves of their Follies, by throwing the Blame on them. But, ſhould any of this Character peruſe this; ſuffer me to expoſtulate with you a little. You are conſcious to yourſelves of great Guilt. You have not liſtened, as you ſhould have

done, to the Remonſtrances of Reaſon and Conſcience. You have ſoothed and cheriſhed your own depraved Inclinations, thrown yourſelves in the Way of Temptation, eagerly caught at every Shadow of Objection to the Truth of Religion, and with the full Conſent of your Hearts, complied with the Solicitations of Sin. And all the Evil that hath followed, you muſt acknowledge you have righteouſly deſerved. Think not to ſcreen yourſelves thro the Imprudence, or even the criminal Neglects of your Parents. God is juſt. And at his Tribunal you muſt ſooner or later plead guilty. — But further,

There is another Method of "provoking Children to Wrath," [viz] the partial Affection of a Parent for one Child in Preference to others, equally deſerving.

This is acting in direct Oppoſition, both to the Will and the Conduct of our Almighty Father, who, in his Diſpenſations towards Men, teacheth another and better Leſſon. The Children of Nature all divide his Tenderneſs, all ſhare his equal Love, without Partiality, Prejudice or Reſpect of Perſons; — we ſhould, therefore, follow his Steps and imitate his Juſtice.

Nothing but a ſuperior Share of Duty and Obedience, can lay-claim to ſuperior Favour and Indulgence; — No external Beauty or Form, however ſhining, no natural Accompliſhments, however excel-

lent;

lent; no Pre-eminence of Genius, Talents, or Abilities, however brilliant or engaging, ſhould have any Weight in the Caſe of parental Love, as to deſtroy that equal Balance, which ſhould be ever held with a ſteady and unſhaken Hand.

When this is once loſt, the Foundations of domeſtic Happineſs are underminded; Strife, Diviſion and Animoſity uſurp the Seats of Harmony and Peace; and where Jealouſy and Hatred are thus early ſown, they generally ſhoot up into a rank and fruitful Harveſt of Guilt and Miſery. When Children find it impoſſible to pleaſe, they will naturally loſe all Deſire of pleaſing; — where they are neglected, they will as generally neglect; — and where they are injured, they will naturally reſent.

Theſe, with innumerable other ill Conſequences, which it is unneceſſary to enumerate, will inevitably flow from the partial Diſtribution of parental Affection. And yet, there is ſcarce a numerous Family to be met with, where this Evil is not, in ſome Meaſure, ſeen, felt, and lamented.

There are, we muſt acknowledge, ſtrange Weakneſſes, Prejudices & Prepoſſeſſions in human Nature, not eaſily to be accounted for, which act, doubtleſs, as forcibly on Parents, as on other Men; — But, when we are under their Preſſure, we muſt call-in Reaſon

and Religion to our Aid, that we may counteract and ſubdue them; above all, we muſt remember to place ourſelves in the Situation of thoſe, who are to ſuffer by them, and then (obſerving the great Criterion of Juſtice) "do as we would be done unto." — But,

3dly, Another Method, and which is too often practiſed by angry and inexorable Parents, of "provoking their Children to Wrath," is, by unjuſtly defrauding them of their Inheritance, without Cauſe.

Children have a clear and indiſputable Right, from the great Charter of Nature, to the Poſſeſſions of their Parents; and unleſs that Right is forfeited by ſome flagrant Enormity, it cannot, with any Degree of Equity, be wreſted from them. The Laws of Men, in this Caſe, coincide with the Laws of God; and the Claim of Inheritance, in all civilized Nations, is univerſally allowed, unleſs the contrary is peculiarly ſpecified.

Thoſe Offences, therefore, ſhould be of a very heinous Nature, and accompanied with moſt aggravating Circumſtances, which can excuſe a Parent in bereaving his Children of their Patrimony. No venial Inadvertency, ariſing from Inexperience, no imprudent Sallies of unguarded Youth, nor unpremeditated Acts of caſual Diſobedience can palliate ſuch Injuſtice. (*)

For

(*) The Cauſes commonly aſſigned to juſtify Parents diſinheriting their Children, are many; Firſt,

For the most Part, indeed, scarce any other Cause can

First, The *striking* of Parents has been all along esteemed a sufficient Cause for casting them off. — We have an Account how this is punished among the Chinese; Insomuch, that if a Son should be known to kill, or so much as to strike his Father, not only the Criminal, but his whole Family would be rooted out; nay, the Inhabitants of the Place where he lived would be put to the Sword; nay, the Place itself would be razed to the Ground, and its Foundations sown with Salt: For, say they, There must have been an utter Depravation of Manners in that Clan or Society of People who could have bred up among them so horrid an Offender.

The Persians were of Opinion that no Man ever killed his Father, or that it is possible that Such a Crime should be in Nature; but if any thing like it should ever happen, they conclude that the reputed Son must have been illegitimate, suppositious or begotten in Adultery. Their Opinion in this Particular shews sufficiently what Notion they must have had of Undutifulness in general.

There seems to be so much of Impiety in such Violence, that no One can hear of it, without assenting to, and desiring its Punishment. The Ancients allowed but of two Excuses for this Crime: the one was, When they could not otherwise avoid extreme Hurt from their Parents: It must be in defending themselves; and that, not from a small Correction, or light Suffering; but from some extraordinary Violence that might endanger their Lives; some Evil that could not be presumed to be intended by a Parent to a Child, but might be the Effect of a blind and unadvised Rage. In such a Case it was excused, rather than allowed: They did not, for this Misfortune, think the Child deserved to be undone; because they believed the Parent himself, when he recovered his Senses, would be glad to find so much Evil prevented by such Opposition.

The other Excuse was, If it were done in fighting and defending their Country. The Ancients preferred the Liberties and Safety

can be assigned for the Commission of this Crime, but Whim,

of their Country to all other Considerations whatever: And, if we do not so too, it is not that we have either more Reason, Honour, or Religion, than they had; but a more contracted Mind and Interest. — If it had happened that a Father took-part with the Enemies of his Country, and in Fight were met and wounded by his Son; the Father afterwards might not for this, bestow his Birth-right upon another; he was not hereby presumed undutiful or impious, nor to be punished as such: the Duty he owed his Country was antecedent to, and greater than what he owed his Parent; and the Parent was in a wrong Place when he suffered at his Hands. And yet, for any Cause besides, or upon any other Account, the Child might not withstand his Parent, nor lift up his Hand against him, without falling from all the Right and Advantage his Birth and Descent might entitle him to.

Another Cause, that justified the Parent's disinheriting his Child, was, the being found, by any Means, to have contrived his Death, or laid Snares to entrap him in Mischief. Nay, if the Children did but accuse their Parents of any Crime, by which they were brought into Hazard of either Banishment, or Mutilation, or Death, and the Parents were acquitted; if the Children did this voluntarily & without Constraint, the Parents might justly disinherit them: for, Children are presumed to think and act the best for their Parents, and to construe and do every thing in their Favour, and to hide, if possible, their real Faults from the World, & not to be convinced, or give up the Defence of their Character, but upon plain and evident Matter of Fact; and even then to mitigate it, and find all the Excuses they possibly can for them: And therefore, an Accuser of his Parents has been always looked upon in the most odious Light, and therefore truly fit to be cut off from all Favour.

There are other Causes that justify the Parent's disinheriting his Children, when they are only negligent of their Duty, either care-

lessly

Whim, Caprice, or Reſentment. Some there are who

lefsly or deſignedly; as deſerting him in Sickneſs or Diſtreſs, when it was in their Power to help and relieve them.

All theſe Caſes afford the Parent, when he recovers his Health or Freedom, juſt Occaſion to diſinherit his Child, who being evidently unnatural, deſerves no Favour.

The other Cauſes, aſſigned to juſtify Parents herein, are ſuch as concern, not their Perſons, but their Fame and Reputation in ſome Reſpects: When their Faults are ſcandalous, and reflect Diſgrace and Infamy upon the Parents and the Family; when they are extremely wicked and immoral, and give no Hopes of Reformation and Amendment, but are, to all Appearance, irreclaimable.

Virtue and Vice are of as much Importance, and therefore as much to be conſidered by Laws, as Right and Wrong, in raiſing and preſerving Families; and it tends exceedingly to the Advantage of a State and Government, that Virtue in Children ſhould have the Encouragement of hoping to ſucceed to their Father's Fortune; and that notorious Vice ſhould receive the like Diſcouragement. A Parent, indeed, has not a Method more likely to ſucceed, nor any Reſtraint more powerful over the inſolent & vicious Tempers of Children, than the Power of transferring their Eſtates from them, when they make themſelves unworthy to receive them. And therefore, thoſe Parents are greatly to be blamed, who unadviſedly diveſt themſelves of this Power before their Time, by putting their Children in full Poſſeſſion of what they have, before their Death.

The Caſe, indeed, may ſometimes happen, when it may be fit and reaſonable, and profitable ſo to do; but it is but very ſeldom, and the Neceſſity ought to be preſſing, and the Advantages great and certain, before it is done; becauſe the Events of ſuch Practice have been often miſchievous and truly pitiable: For it is too frequently found that when there is no more Expectation, there will be

who ſcreen their Guilt under the Veil of Piety, and cloath their Vice in the Habit of Virtue: – But, this is but a wretched Subterfuge; the mean Evaſion of Cruelty and Pride. (*)

The Man who deprives his Children of their Inheritance, and impoveriſhes his Poſterity, to ſooth his Vanity by an ill-placed Beneficence, tho he may be canonized as a Saint upon Earth, yet will he never be enrolled among the Bleſſed in Heaven. (‡) It is, upon the whole, an Act of Injuſtice, which, however the Offender may reconcile to himſelf by ſpecious Arguments, however by deluſive Reaſons he may perſuade the World to paſs over or approve, his Conſcience will moſt probably reproach him for in this World, and his Creator puniſh in the next. To

do more Dependence; and then it will be well if they only grow neglectful, and not alſo inſolent and unnatural.

Theſe are the Caſes excuſing Parents in caſting off their Children; at leaſt the Children deſerve it; their Conſciences reproach them not of Cruelty, or Want of natural Affection to their Children, whoſe Offences do thus diſpenſe with the Parents' Duty towards them: and without theſe Faults a Parent will never be eaſy, nor innocent in caſting off his own Children from him.

See this Caſe further ſpoken to, in Vol. viii. Page 112, &c.

(*) See the Note, Page 16, &c.

(‡) "He ſacrificeth of a thing wrongfully gotten," (and ſuch is every thing that a Man hath not Right to give, nor alienate from his Family,) "his Offering is ridiculous—The Gifts of unjuſt Men are not accepted."

To the foregoing, we cannot but add, that Parents who consume their whole Estate, with which they should provide for their Children, in Gaming and Excess, in Riot and sinful Pleasures, are in no better Condition, nor better discharge their Duty to their Children, than they, who for little or no Cause, disinherit them. For, tho it must be granted, that there is a great Difference betwixt the Minds and Affections of these Parents, yet the Effect to the Children is the same, who are rendered as destitute and helpless by the One's Neglect, as by the Other's Displeasure.

Parents, indeed, who, thro causeless Anger, or thro the false Suggestions of others, disinherit their Children, are much more innocent, than they who riotously, vainly and viciously spend the Estates which might, and should contribute to their Children's Sustenance and Welfare (*). Such, therefore, when they come to die, if they are not by Misery reduced beforehand to confident, cannot satisfy themselves with remembring that they had never any Intention to wrong their Children's Will, thro their Folly and Negligence, they left those Children miserable, which might, and should have been provided for by them.

In this Case it is not enough for them to grieve, as they

(*) See Knox's Essays, the latter Part of No. 27. On the Folly and Wickedness of neglecting a Family and Children for the Pleasures of Dissipation.

they naturally will, at the Misfortunes of their Children; but they ought to be exceeding ſorrowful in Repentance before God for them, without which they will be ſeverely puniſhed: for, he is eſteemed to have "denied the Faith, and to be worſe than an Infidel:" and therefore, it will be more tolerable for them, in the Day of Judgment, than for him. — But further,

Another Branch of parental Duty, the Omiſſion of which muſt "provoke Children to Wrath," is not only to bequeath to them their due Patrimony, not only to provide for their future Eaſe and Happineſs, but to promote by every Method in their Power, their preſent and immediate Welfare: to adminiſter to their Neceſſities, relieve their Diſtreſs, to double every Comfort, and leſſen every Calamity. — Tho here,

For the Diſtribution of our Subſtance, we are not to be called to account too ſtrictly: what we have to give, even in our Life-time, or to leave behind us at our Death, is not to be deemed, even by our Children, as a Debt; that Part, eſpecially, which is of our own Acquiſition. — We ſhould conſider, however, the Cuſtoms as well as the Laws of our Country, what will generally be thought right, and what we ourſelves ſhall be likely to approve at our laſt Hour, that our own Hearts may not then condemn us.

Not that it is hereby intended to counſel any to an im-

immediate and final Diſpoſal of what he hath, even to his Children. It is one thing to arrange, and another to alienate. This latter is not thought, generally, adviſeable. Gratitude is not found ſo ſtrong a Principle, as Expectation: and the Parent, who would be ſure of his Children's Obedience, muſt not only have been very kind to them; but alſo keep it in his Power to be ſo ſtill.

The wiſe Son of Sirach is particularly earneſt on this Point. "Hear me ye great Men of the People, and hearken with your Ears, ye Rulers of the Congregation. "GIVE NOT THY SON, and WIFE, THY BROTHER, and FRIEND, Power over thee while thou liveſt. Give not thy Goods to another, leſt it repent thee, and thou intreat for the ſame again. As long as thou liveſt, and haſt Breath in thee, give not thyſelf over to any; for, better it is that thy Children ſhould ſeek to thee, than that thou ſhouldſt ſtand to their Courteſie. In all thy Works keep to thyſelf the Pre-eminence: and at the Time that thou ſhalt end thy Days and finiſh thy Life, diſtribute thine Inheritance." Yet,

There is an Error on the other Side.—As Liberality without Meaſure may be imprudent; ſo extreme Parſimony would be cruel. Too great a Depreſſion of thoſe whom we muſt advance at our Death, will ſpoil both the Grace and Value of our Gift; making

our Heirs unhappy, firſt in the tedious Expectation, and then in the aukward Poſſeſſion of a Fortune they were never taught to uſe or to enjoy.

Nor Sons only, but Daughters, by ſuch ill-judged Œconomy, have been greatly injured, and have taken a dangerous Revenge. They cannot, indeed, be juſtified – but neither are you excuſable: for, it is to be remembered, that as you are joined in the Blame, you will find yourſelves certainly to partake in the Conſequences, whatever they be. Beſides, the Diſhonour, and Diſtreſs will always reach you—your Happineſs is involved in theirs—and whatever you may acquire, or keep, You may appear ſplendid, and be called fortunate; but you will never be happy, while you have Children that are miſerable and infamous.

The Inheritance we leave our Children, though not ſtrictly, in Law, a Debt, legally to be demanded of us; yet, is a Debt we owe to Nature; and which Juſtice demands of us. And there is very little Merit in parting with THAT which we can no longer retain. Poſthumous Charity, therefore, as well of this, as of every other Kind, is of ſmall Value or Eſteem. (*) When

(*) A truly charitable Man looks with Diſdain on thoſe who propoſe their Death as the Time when they are to begin their Munificence. He (which the Others cannot) both ſees and enjoys, in the higheſt Degree, what he beſtows himſelf, as being the living Executor

When Parents bequeath large Estates, after their Deaths, to their Children, whom they had kept in the utmost Misery all their Lives, the Consequence generally is, the Children are "provoked," and justly "provoked to Wrath." They hereby become base, – acquainted with Shifts, – associate with mean Company, and surfeit when they come to Plenty.

The Omission of Duty on one Part produces a Neglect of it on the other; the Bonds of mutual Affection are gradually loosened; – To the Warmth of Love and Tenderness, succeeds Coldness and Indifference; those, who stand in Need of Support and Assistance, and at the same Time think they have a Right to it, will be greatly hurt, when it is unkindly with-held from them; – instead of praying for the Continuance of their Parents' Life, they are tempted, but too often, to look forwards with secret Satisfaction, towards the Dissolution of it; (*) — And, Where

ecutor of his own Bounty; while they who have the Happiness to be within his Care and Patronage, at once pray for the Continuance of his Life, and their own good Fortune.

"A Gift hath Grace in the Sight of every Man living; and for the Dead detain it not. Therefore, do Good unto thy Friend before thou die, and according to thy Ability stretch out thy Hand and give unto him."

(*) *Filius ante Diem Patrios inquirit in Annos,*
Filius Interita gaudeat ille tuo.

See No 426, of the Spectator.

Where, indeed, there is Penury, Diſtreſs and Reſentment on one ſide, with Affluence, Avarice and Inhumanity on the other, all the Aid, which filial Affection, Morality and Religion can afford, will ſometimes prove ineffectual. — But,

If, on the contrary, by your Attention and Encouragement, by a ſuitable Education, and conſtant Kindneſs, tempered, or rather, indeed, heightened by Diſcretion; you can, with God's Bleſſing, make them good, in the firſt Place; you will do them the greateſt Service that is poſſible — you will diſchargre your own Conſcience, and acquit yourſelves faithfully of the great Truſt repoſed in you by Providence, and reap your Reward in their Merit, and feel the Comfort of all their Hap-

It is the Duty of Parents to take all that kind Care, which is the Foundation of Love; to keep up ſuch Authority, as may ſecure Reſpect; to give ſuch reaſonable Commands, as may engage a willing Obedience; and thus to make their Children ſo good, & themſelves ſo eſteemed by them, that they may depend, in Caſe of Need, on Aſſiſtance and Succour from them. For,

As all Relations are founded on mutual and reciprocal Dependencies, and we have no Right to demand where we have never bowed any thing, it muſt neceſſarily follow, that the Love, Reſpect, & Obedience which are required of Children, are founded on thoſe Benefits which they have from Time to Time received at the Hands of their Parents, who are thus rewarded for their Care and Tenderneſs. As Children are bound to ſerve and reverence their Parents, Parents are alſo, on their Part, equally obliged to ſupport and provide for their Children; not to provoke them to Wrath, but to bring them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord.

Happiness both in this World, & that which is to come. Add to these, the many Instances of Gratitude and Affection to be expected from such Children, which may prove to be useful, and will always be pleasing; you will participate of all their Welfare, reflected, as it were, into your own Bosom; as your Kindness laid the Foundation of their Felicity, the Influence is reciprocal; and their Virtues, and those of their Children after them, will be to you, Matter of constant and growing Satisfaction. "Children's Children are the Crown of Old Men, and the Glory of Children are their Fathers."

If Parents, therefore, hope for Love, Tenderness and Obedience from their Children, they must, as long as they live, in Proportion to their Abilities, assist, support, and relieve them.

Various are the Particulars in which this Assistance, Support and Relief is to be administered.

To determine with any Manner of Exactness respecting these things, it will be necessary to have Regard to the Age, Condition, and Capacity of Children. But these we shall consider in their proper Place.

Therefore, Lastly, Parents may "provoke their Children to Wrath," by their own wicked and licentious Lives; (*) not only by a Neglect and Disregard of

(*) "The Children will complain of an ungodly Father, because they shall be reproached for his Sake." Serm. CCCLXXIV.

of them, but alſo by the little Attention which they pay to themſelves, and to their own Character and Reputation in the World. (*)

As Parents frequently ſuffer for the Follies of their Children, ſo may Children alſo ſuffer for the Follies of their Parents; — It becomes all Men to act with Prudence and Diſcretion, to behave ſoberly and religiouſly, and to abſtain from every evil Word and Work. — But,

It is peculiarly incumbent on every Parent, (as they would "keep a Conſcience void of Offence") to put a Bridle on their Lips, and place a Guard over their Heart. The ſolemn Relation which they have entered into, and the important Office they are bound to perform, demand a more than ordinary Care of their Conduct in every Particular.

The Minds of Children are ſo ſuſceptible of every Im-

(*) Parents ſhould exhibit to their Children, in their own Temper and Conduct, a fair & bright Portrait of thoſe Virtues to which by their Inſtructions they endeavour to attract their Attention.

The Dictates of Morality, when beheld by the youthful Eye thro the pleaſing Mirrour of their Example, whom natural Affection hath taught them to revere and love, will be apt to make a deep Impreſſion on the Heart. And thoſe muſt be truly depraved Children indeed, who, whilſt they carry their Parents Image in their Countenance, can take Pains to perſuade the World, that they bear no Affinity to them in their nobler Part. See the laſt Part of No. 150, of the Spectator.

Impression; so entirely guided by the Direction, and influenced by the Example of those who are immediately connected with them, that no Caution can be too great, nor Restraint too severe, with Regard to every thing done and said within their Presence, or within the Sphere of their Knowledge and Comprehension. (*)

There is a Reverence due to Youth, as well as to Age; not an Action should be committed before Children, which hath the least Tendency towards Sin; not a Word should escape our Lips, that might taint the Purity of unsullied Innocence. (‡) Children will always believe, that you think THAT to be the best which you practise yourselves, because you do it of Choice; and if you did not think it best, why should you do it?

If we blaspheme the Name of God, by swearing and cursing; if we abuse ourselves or others by Riot and Intemperance, how can we expect our Children should revere that dreadful Name we profane, and love that Sobriety and Temperance we recommend, but do not practise? What Effect can Words have, when we contradict them in our Actions? If our Children improve in Wickedness by our ill Examples, what will our Ex-

(*) See Vol. xviii. Page 334, &c.

(‡) *Juniorum Animi malâ Disciplinâ facilè depravantur.* Serm. CCCLXXIV.

Exhortations & Admonitions avail, unleſs to reproach ourſelves, and increaſe our own Condemnation?

With what Face, or with what Succeſs can any One reprimand his Family for Irregularities which he himſelf commits? or exhort to Virtues, that he only talks of, but doth not practice?

As it will be cruel in you to correct them for thoſe Vices which you yourſelves not only teach, but tempt them to, by your Example; ſo it will be vain, and impoſſible for you to reform them by it.

For this Reaſon, if you have any Regard for their Well-being in this World, and their Salvation in the next, you will be very careful not to lead them in the Paths of Perdition; not to guide or go before them in the Ways of Sin, "which go down to the Chambers of Death."

Parents, therefore, have an additional Reaſon to be religious and exemplary, over and above the Motives that are common to all Chriſtians. They cannot themſelves do Miſchief, without great Hazard to thoſe whom they have brought into the World.

How much, then, has the guilty Parent to anſwer for, who, inſtead of ſetting a fair Example to his Children, and directing them in the Paths of Truth and Happineſs, miſleads their unweary Steps into the Paths of Sin and Sorrow; who corrupts thoſe Morals, which he

he ought to improve; and ſubjects thoſe to the divine Wrath, whom it is his indiſpenſible Duty to ſhelter from it. But if Parents will with Tenderneſs and Affection inſtruct their Children in the Ways of Virtue and Religion, and confirm them in the Practice thereof by their own good Example, none would behave undutifully, or live wickedly, but ſuch as are in their Nature deplorably vicious.

Teſtify your Affections, therefore, for your Children in the moſt important Inſtance both to yourſelves and them. Go before them in every thing that is good. Inſtruct and lead them in the Way to Heaven, not only by your Advice, but alſo by the ſilent and perſuaſive Admonition of your own virtuous Life and good Example. Tho poor yourſelves, you will, in this Caſe, give them a noble Fortune, by teaching them to be good Chriſtians. Your Example may be better to them, than a large Eſtate. But, what amends will you make them, by all the Kindneſs you can ſhew, or the Poſſeſſions you can provide, if it ſhould be owing to you, that they are cut-off at laſt, from "the Inheritance of the Saints in Light," and condemned to have their Portion forever, "where ſhall be Weeping, and Wailing, and Gnaſhing of Teeth?"

Tho' many other Cauſes, ariſing from particular Incidents in Life, or from the different Tempers and

Diſpoſitions of Men, may occaſionally conſpire to diſturb the Peace of Families, by "provoking their Children to Wrath;" yet thoſe already mentioned, will generally be found the moſt prevalent.

The beſt Method to guard againſt ſuch Weakneſs, and to prevent the ill Conſequences of them, is, probably, the Rule of Conduct, which the Apoſtle hath preſcribed in the latter Part of the Text, admoniſhing Parents to "bring up their Children in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord."

The Explanation of which, and the Motives to it we ſhall, in Courſe, regularly purſue.

Sermon

SERMON CCCLXXV.

On the same Subject.

Ephe. vi. 4. "Fathers, provoke not your Children "to Wrath; but bring them up in the Nurture "and Admonition of the Lord."

Having already considered the NEGATIVE Part of a Parent's Duty, as contained in the 1st. Point or Proposition in the Text, I shall now apply myself to the POSITIVE Part of it; — "But bring them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord."

In speaking to this Point, I shall distinctly enumerate, in Order, the several Duties of Parents to their Children, as they respect both their temporal and spiritual Welfare and Happiness. — The former consists in protecting and providing for their Bodies; as the other does for their Souls.

As to the First of these, the Care of the Health and Constitution of their Bodies, This should begin earlier, & extend further than is commonly done, or imagined.

It is a constant Care in the Culture of Seeds and Plants, to have strict Regard to the Goodness & Health

of

of the Grain or Stock you rear from; becauſe ſuch as theſe are, ſuch will the Increaſe be. The ſame Care we exert in Relation to all the Creatures, whoſe Increaſe we are concerned in, and ſhould count it ſtrange Stupidity to breed from what is either diſeaſed or vicious; and with great Reaſon; becauſe ſuch as the Progenitors are, ſuch, in all Probability, will the Iſſue and Progeny be. And,

If Men be ſo much, and ſo juſtly concerned for the Fruits of the Earth, and the Increaſe of their Kine; can it be a Queſtion, whether they ſhould be much more concerned for their own? eſpecially as it is of far worſe Conſequence to bring a corrupt Man into the World, than a bad Plant or a vicious Beaſt. And therefore, all Perſons that intend to marry, ſhould take particular Care both of their Body and their Mind, to form both in ſuch a Manner, as that neither may be a Source of Evil to the World: they ſhould, above all things, take-care not to become the Founders of a vicious and infected Race. For this Reaſon they are to take-care to ſtrengthen themſelves by Temperance and Exercife, and to abſtain from all Exceſs whatever, by which their Health and Strength may be impaired. And, above all, they are carefully to abſtain from that Vice, ſo common and ſo fatal to Youth, for whoſe Puniſhment God hath, in ſignal Judgment, appointed ſo

ſevere

ſevere and dreadful a Diſtemper; a Diſtemper of ſuch diſtinguiſhed Malignity, and inveterate Infection, that it deſcendeth to late Poſterity; and is one of the chief, among thoſe remarkable Methods by which "God viſiteth the Sins of the Fathers upon the Children, to the third and fourth Generation."

And as the Body is to be diſciplined to Health and Strength by Temperance and Exerciſe; ſo likewiſe ſhould the Mind be diſciplined to Knowledge and Religion, by proper Information and Inſtruction, and by the Practice of every Virtue. Good Habits ſhould be acquired, and vicious ones removed, with all poſſible Diligence, before Men become Parents; that they may not derive the Guilt upon themſelves, of having filled the World with a Race of Fiends and Monſters; nor the Curſe upon their Poſterity of having evil Conſtitutions and evil Habits conveyed to them with their very Being; ſuch Habits as may make them miſerable in this World, and lead them to everlaſting Miſery in the World to come! foraſmuch as it is well known, that the Diſpoſitions of the Mind, like the Features of the Body, are conveyed down from the Father to Son; and therefore the firſt Duty that Parents owe their Children, is to convey Health, and Strength, and a good Conſtitution of Body and Mind to them, as far as it is in their Power ſo to do, by a proper Care of

their own Health, and a conſcientious Abſtinence from all Exceſs and Vice of every Kind. — And,

When this is done, the next Care they owe their Children, is to provide for their Health and Strength, by proper Nouriſhment.

Parents are not to think they have done enough, in bringing their Children into the World in as good a Condition as they could. That, although not the leaſt, is however but the firſt Part of their Duty. The next is, to ſupport the good Conſtitution they have brought into the World, by proper Nouriſhment, and Care of their Health.

That this is the Duty of Parents is evident; for it has often been obſerved with great Truth that among all the Creatures that inhabit our World, none come into it in ſo helpleſs a State, and none require the Aſſiſtance and Protection of others for ſo long a Term, as the human Species. (*) This is a humiliating Conſideration. But we may be ſure the all-wiſe and good Creator would not permit it ſo to be, without providing the neceſſary Means for their Conſervation and Support.

This he hath done, and in a Way truly admirable. A certain Inſtinct He has implanted in the Breaſts of Parents towards their Offspring, which effectually operates to the Purpoſe of ſecuring them all the Aſſiſtance neceſſary to their helpleſs State. We

(*) See Vol. xviii. Page 27.

We call it Inſtinct, becauſe it is not the Effect of Reaſoning, but connatural to us and ſcarce capable of being eradicated out of our Nature. (*)

This Inſtinct prevails in the Breaſt of the Mother in a ſoft and tender Manner, ſuited to the Kind of Duty required of her towards her Children, in the firſt and early Stage of Life. In the Father it operates differently, but equally effectual. (†) It impels him to the Exertion of all his Powers, in Order to provide a Sub-

(*) In Brute Beaſts there is ſo ſtrong a parental Affection, as that they will expoſe their Lives to the greateſt Hazard for the Preſervation and Defence of their Young. And if the Inſtinct and Impulſe of Nature is ſo powerful in irrational Creatures, how much more ſhould it prevail on us, who have Reaſon given us on Purpoſe to perfect Nature? Their Weakneſs and Impotency demand from us our Care and Protection. To how many Diſeaſes and Dangers in their feeble Infancy expoſed? and their growing Childhood, thro' Want of Care and Experience, daily leads them into many more. Parents, therefore, are to guard & defend them from every threatned Injury; and if it is inhuman for Parents to neglect the Care of their Children, much more wicked and diabolical is it to hurt and deſtroy them.

(†) Nature itſelf ſeems to have ſufficiently pointed out the diſtinct Offices of the Father and the Mother, in theſe things; for the ſame Duties are not required of both. To the Mother ſeems to be peculiarly aſſigned the Nouriſhment of the *Animal Frame*, and all the nervous Cares which relate to the Body: But the Deportment of the Father is of much more noble Kind; for to him is devolved the Care of providing, and rearing the thinking & immortal Subſtance.

Subſiſtence for his Family; and to the beſt Uſe of that ſuperior Senſe and Judgment he poſſeſſes, in Order to prepare and qualify them for the Stations of Life they are to fill: and is attended, to both, with ſo much Delight and Complacence in the tender Offspring, as is a natural Relief and Compenſation for all the Trouble attending it.

And tho an Attention to Children, during their firſt Period, may, on ſome Accounts, be deemed leſs important than afterwards, yet on others it is more ſo.

The like Exertions, it is true, in Point of Underſtanding, Prudence, and Reſolution, on the Part of Parents, are not ſo requiſite in this early Stage, as when they advance towards Maturity. Yet their After-health, Improvement in Knowledge and moral Character, depend more upon the Treatment they receive from their firſt Guardians, Inſtructors, and Managers, than is commonly imagined.

As to their external Frame, Nature hath endowed the Female Sex with ſuch Tenderneſs of Diſpoſition and Warmth of Affection, as admirably qualifies them for all the painful, but to them pleaſing Duties of nurturing and rearing their Young; inſomuch, that no other Caution is neceſſary here, than that they take-care not to carry their Indulgence too far, but enure them by Degrees to ſuch Hardineſs as will contribute not a little to the Preſervation of their Health. That

That Women may have wherewithal to cherish this Joy in their Hearts, and to support these tender Objects of their Love with Delight, God hath furnished them with the most proper Food, for the Nourishment of their Young; and hath annexed a very uncommon Degree of Pleasure to the Administration of it, and as uncommon a Degree of Pain and Danger, to the withholding of it from their Infants; so that this is as plainly a Law of Nature to all Mothers, as it is possible to conceive any Law to be; attended with immediate Rewards and Punishments, as it is obeyed or transgressed.

As to the Rewards that attend the Observance of this Law of Nature, possibly few Women know any thing of it; as having never tried the natural Pleasure there is in administering the Breast to their own helpless Infants; unless perhaps their Physicians might, at some Time or other, have prescribed it to them for a Cure or Recovery. But as to the Punishment that attends the withholding of that Nourishment from their Issue, we doubt not but that most Mothers, may be sufficiently acquainted with it; since it is well known, that repelling the Efforts of Nature by Art, always occasions Fevers, and a Variety of other dangerous Disorders, which often end in the Death, and always in the Danger, of the unnatural Mothers; and not unfrequently

make their Lives miſerable. And all theſe Evils they endure to avoid the Diſcharge of a delightful Duty, which they owe to God, and to their natural Offspring; and to which they are urged, by an innocent, exquiſite Delight, and by one of the ſtrongeſt Inſtincts in the World; ſo that we may apply to the Women of our Age that bitter Complaint of Jeremiah. "Even the Sea-monſters draw out their Breaſt, they give-ſuck to their young Ones: but the Daughter of my People is become cruel, like the Oſtriches in the Wilderneſs." (*)

This is one of the Effects of that falſe Politeneſs, which hath enfeebled the World. How much better would it become us to imitate the ſimpler Manners of thoſe ſeemingly rude Nations, where all Women think themſelves indiſpenſibly obliged to this Duty, from the higheſt to the loweſt; (‡) and think themſelves ſufficiently authorized in doing ſo, from the Example of the Brute-World around them. (†) It

(*) Lamen. iv. 3.

(‡) Sympſon tells us, in his Voyage to the Eaſt-Indies, that in the Moloques Mothers ſuckle their own Children; and dare not do otherwiſe, not even the Queen. Page 141.

(†) Did we only view the natural Care of the inferior Part of the Creation towards their Young, it muſt be granted, that the ſlothful, over-nice, or unnatural Mother muſt read her own Conviction; and, neglecting or diſdaining to nurſe her own Child, when able, muſt confeſs that ſhe tranſgreſſes the plain Dictates of the God of Nature, who hath ordained that every Creature that is bleſſed with a living Offspring, ſhould give the ſame its firſt Nouriſhment.

It is true, this Duty, as it is attended with much Pleaſure, ſo it is alſo attended with Care and Trouble; but then it is ſo chiefly to the Poor, who are forced to undergo it all themſelves; and yet theſe are almoſt the only People that diſcharge it; and even theſe own, that the Pleaſure of it greatly exceeds the Pain; and it is plain it muſt be ſo, both from the Goodneſs of God, and the Preſervation of the Creatures, which muſt otherwiſe periſh. And this is clearly evidenced from the Joy and Complacence expreſſed by the pooreſt Creatures, in the Performance of it. And the Reaſon of this is evident; the Breaſt is one of the moſt nervous and delicate Textures of our Frame, and wonderfully fitted by the Author of our Being, for thoſe fine Senſations, which the ſoft and tender Infant-organs are as well fitted to produce; the natural Conſequence of which is, Love, Joy, and Complacence in the Inſtrument of that innocent Happineſs; and Love makes Toil not only tolerable, but delightful; and, if Women of better Condition would but once ſuffer themſelves to be governed in this Point, by the Dictates of their Duty, certainly, to them it would be doubly delightful! inaſmuch as they could eaſily be relieved by the Aſſiſtance of Servants, from every thing offenſive and vexatious in that parental Office: and then, nothing would remain in the Diſcharge of it, beſides the natural Plea-

ſure that attends it: and this, without any Regard to the Joys of a good Conſcience, would be abundantly its own Reward. Or, ſay it were not, where is there any Duty in Life, that is not attended with ſome Uneaſineſs? and if that could excuſe from the Diſcharge of it, there would be no ſuch thing as Virtue in the World; Merit and Demerit, Praiſe and Diſpraiſe, would be taken away from the Earth! and then Idleneſs and Induſtry, Courage and Cowardice, would be reduced to one Value; and Temperance and Chaſtity would be placed upon the ſame Level with Diſſoluteneſs and Drunkenneſs. And therefore if Women have any Regard to the Diſcharge of Duty, in a Point of ſo great Conſequence, both to their own Health and Happineſs, as well as to the Health and Happineſs of their Children, and the good of Mankind; they are, in the ordinary Courſe of things, indiſpenſibly obliged to nurſe their own Children at their own Breaſts, if they are fitted ſo to do, and their Health will allow it. And how much more rational and eligible is this, than to expoſe them (as is now the common Practice) to the Neglect and Cruelty, to the Vices and Diſtempers, of mercenary Women, who have no Regard to them, from any other Tie but that of Intereſt! And, foraſmuch as they often find their Account in the Death of the Infant, more than in its Life and Health, there is no

no Queſtion, but the Proſpect of thoſe Perquiſites which attend a new Nurſing, often tempts them to many inhumane Methods of getting rid of the Incumbrance of one Infant, to make-way for another they expect more Advantage from. And, on the other Hand, if they find their Account in the Life of the preſent Child, (as, God knows, their whole Subſiſtence often depends upon it,) then are they too much tempted, never to let him die; we mean, to impoſe another upon you, when he doth. And, by this Means, the ſpurious Iſſue of Idlers and Vagrants, the Dregs of Stews and Brothels, are ſubſtituted in the Place of your legitimate Offspring, and divide the Inheritance with Brethren; or perhaps come ſingle, and alone, into the Enjoyment of all that Fortune, which you have toiled to gain; it may be, to the Loſs of your own Souls. And, no doubt, but this is often the Caſe, when the reputed Children of good Parents, who have been well principled, and carefully educated, in the Fear of God, betray ſuch profligate, perverſe, abandoned Diſpoſitions, as are no Way to be accounted for, upon any natural Principles, other than their being the ſecret Iſſue of other Parents, from whom they have derived the hidden Seeds of ſo much Villany and Corruption.

To all this may be added another Motive of great Importance to all Mothers; the early engaging the ten-

der Affections of their Iſſue in their Favour, which is perhaps the beſt Security of their Duty.

It is well known, that Nurſing hath a natural Tendency, and (if either are not very abandoned) muſt, in ſome Meaſure, create a mutual Endearment between Parents and their Children, now too little ſeen in the World.

The Duty of Mothers, in providing for the Health and Strength of their Children by proper Nouriſhment, being thus evinced, we proceed to the Duty of the Father; for neither is he exempt from his Portion of the Parental Care, in this Point, ſince it is equally his Concern; and, therefore, as the immediate Adminiſtration of Nouriſhment is incumbent on the Mother, it is the Duty of the Father to make a ſufficient Proviſion for her Support in the Adminiſtration of it; and, by all poſſible Marks and Methods of Tenderneſs and Good-nature, to relieve, and make her as happy as he can, in this moſt important Article of the Conjugal Care. And this is no more than what Inſtinct inſpireth many of the inferior Creatures to do. (*)

And,

(*) If Naturaliſts rightly inform us; it is to this we chiefly owe all that Harmony that fills our Fields, and our Groves, at the Approach of Spring; God having ſo appointed it, that the Toil of Incubation ſhould be relieved by ſprightly Muſic; that, whilſt the Female ſits, ſhe ſhould be relieved under that painful and tedious Confinement,

And surely, what Instinct inspireth the lower Creatures to act, in a Point so necessary to their Preservation, Reason, Good-nature, and Affection should yet more strongly direct, in Beings who boast of higher Endowments, and superior Excellence.

I have but one Caution more to add respecting the Parents Care during the Infant-state of their Children, [viz] that Attention should be paid to their external Form. For it sometimes happens, that the Plainness and Deformity of one Child shall expose it to Slights and Neglects, while the Beauty and Comeliness of another shall secure to it excessive Fondness and Partiality. An Evil this of no small Account, since it tends to baulk and discourage the former, and cherish the Seeds of Vanity and Insolence in the latter. Against this pernicious Conduct a prudent Parent will be on his Guard, and rather balance the Account between Children thus differently circumstanced by the opposite Treatment of them. But the ill Effect which a too early

ſinement, by the Songs of her Mate; and where the Male is not endowed with a Power of relieving her Toil in this delightful Manner, then we are assured, he divides it with her, and is frequently seen to force her from the Nest, that he may succeed to his Portion of the Trouble. And,

Besides all this, where the Care of Incubation will not suffer the Female to take her usual Range in Search of Food, her Mate takes care not only to provide it seasonably for her, but also to administer it in the tenderest Manner. Serm. CCCLXXV.

early Idea of their own external Accompliſhments is apt to produce in young People, demands the particular Regard of thoſe to whom their Education is entruſted. It may not be poſſible wholly to conceal from their Knowledge thoſe Advantages with which Nature may have endowed them above others: but certainly a jealous Eye ſhould be kept upon them, and every prudent Meaſure taken to check a Kind of Vanity, which will in a thouſand Ways prejudice both their civil and religious Intereſts.

The Duty of Parents to regard the Health, and to ſupport and nouriſh their Infant-Offſpring, being conſidered; — their next Office, in Courſe, is Inſtruction; that they "bring them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord."

The Right of Parents to educate their Children is truly evident; for, a Paſſion for the Welfare of their Children, which renders them equal to all the Anxieties, Cares, and Labours that attend the painful Buſineſs of bringing Children up into Life, being implanted in the Breaſts of Parents, there can be no Doubt that the Right of Education lies in them. This is the clear, plain Voice of Nature; and is abundantly confirmed by the Sentence of Scripture; and to this, therefore, we have the Conſent of all Mankind. (*) The

(*) The Romans had ſuch a Senſe of the Right of Parents over their

The Right of Parents to educate their Children, being thus founded in their Competence to this important Buſineſs, it may be of Uſe to enquire a little whence it is that ſo many fail in the Diſcharge of this great Duty. The true Reaſon is their Want either of natural Affection, or of Piety, or of Prudence.

If we could ſuppoſe Perſons deſtitute of all Paſſion for their Offspring, they would no Doubt be incapable of bringing them up into Life, for they would want the grand Motive to excite them to Exertions indiſpenſibly neceſſary in this important Buſineſs. But of ſuch Monſters, it is to be hoped there are few in the World. "Can a Woman forget her ſucking Child, that ſhe ſhould not have Compaſſion on the Son of her Womb?" We ſee, however, the great Uſe of cheriſhing in our Breaſts that Affection towards our Children which Nature has implanted there. This will aid us in our Duty, and make us ſuperior to Difficulties which would otherwiſe be inſuperable.

The Want of PIETY is another Remora in the Way of that Duty which the Text requires of Parents. Whatever natural Affection Men may poſſeſs, if they are

their Children, and ſuch a Perſuaſion, that natural Affection would not ſuffer them to abuſe it, that they even entruſted them with the Power of Life and Death. This *Juſtinian* calls, *Proprium Civium Romanorum*. The *Japaneſe* now allow the ſame Authority to Parents.

themſelves Strangers to Religion, they will take little Pains to impreſs a Senſe of it upon the Minds of their Children. And hence it is that this, the moſt important Part of Education, is ſo much neglected. Would you then, Parents, train up your Children in the Way they ſhould go; walk in that Way yourſelves. Let it be your Concern to fear God, and keep his Commandments, and you will quickly be diſpoſed, by your own Experience of the Sweetneſs and Utility of Religion, to uſe your utmoſt Endeavours, in a Dependence upon the Grace of God, to "bring up your Children in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord."

But there is another Obſtruction to the right Diſcharge of this Duty, which ſhould be particularly noticed; [viz] the Imprudence and falſe Tenderneſs of too many, otherwiſe virtuous and good Parents. Theſe ſuffer their parental Affection to tranſport them into an Extreme, totally ſubverſive of the very End for which it was implanted in their Breaſts. Love degenerates into Weakneſs, and a miſtaken Fondneſs for their Children deprives them of that Authority over them, which, duly exerciſed, would ſecure Reſpect to themſelves, and prove a Barrier to them againſt innumerable Evils. There is no Buſineſs, in which a prudent Man ought to ſhew more Caution and Diligence, than in forming his Son's Mind to Goodneſs and Virtue,

tue. To qualify Parents therefore, for the right Discharge of their Duty, they ſhould call-in the Aid of Reaſon and Religion, to enable them to control the irregular Efforts of natural Affection, and to mingle prudent Severity, at due Seaſons, with ſoft Indulgence.

To theſe Occaſions of Delay or Neglect of this Duty, we may add the Objections againſt it, [viz.] by Free-thinkers, That, by inſtilling Principles into Children, we prejudice their Minds—By Fanaticks, That it is taking God's Work out of his Hand into our own—And by Others, That it hath been ſo long neglected, they know not how to begin it.

It is acknowledged that the Prejudices of Education are very ſtrong, and that Sentiments imbibed from their Parents in early Life, Children are but too apt to take for granted, without thoroughly inquiring into them. But if this proves any thing to the Purpoſe of the Objector, it proves too much. It proves that the Children are to be taught nothing about which Mankind are divided, and ſo are to be held in total Ignorance of the firſt Principles of all Science, as well as of Morality and Religion. However, common Senſe and Ingenuity will cauſe Men to teach nothing but what they are fully perſuaded of themſelves; — and even here, to begin with ſuch Truths as are ſelf-evident, and ſo to proceed by Degrees to thoſe which require fur-

ther Inveſtigation, according as their Capacities will admit; laying before them, the ſame Time, the Grounds and Reaſons of every Point held up to their View, perſuading them to attend diligently to the Evidence of things; inſiſting that implicit Faith will be of little Avail, that their receiving any Truth merely on the Authority of other Men will have only a partial, if not ill Effect, and that to believe rightly is to believe on Evidence – Evidence that ſhall clearly appear to themſelves to be of divine Authority. And if Children, thus inſtructed will ſuffer Prejudice in Favour of their Parents' Inſtructions to ſhut up every Avenue to Enquiry, and to preclude all further Information and Conviction, the Fault is their own. But,

There are Others who tell us, that "the inſtructing Children is a fruitleſs Buſineſs, if not a bold Invaſion on the Province of the Holy Spirit." It is his Office, (ſay they,) to enlighten the Underſtanding, and renew the Heart; and the Work ought not to be taken out of his Hand. But it is true of this Objection, as well as of the former, that, if it proves any thing, it proves too much. For, by a Parity of Reaſon, That Influence which pervades through the Creation, and without which the Labours of Men would be fruitleſs, might be urged as an Argument, to juſtify a total Ceſſation from all Buſineſs whatever.

The

The Grace of God, it is true, is neceſſary to renew the Heart. But this Grace is exerted in a Manner perfectly agreeable with our Frame and Conſtruction as reaſonable Creatures. We have the Means of divine Knowledge, the Scriptures, and we are required to read, conſider, and ſearch them; and in ſuch Uſe we may hope to receive divine Illumination. But, becauſe without ſuch Illumination our Study will be vain and fruitleſs, are we juſtified in wholly neglecting them? Upon this Principle, preaching, and every other Mode of Inſtruction, might be interdicted. But it is a Fact which the Experience of many Ages has taught, that a ſerious Attention on the Part of Parents to the Duty we are recommending, has often been accompanied with the moſt ſalutary Advantage to their Children. The Iſraelites received a particular Charge from Moſes reſpecting this Matter, (*) and Timothy had Reaſon to bleſs God as long as he lived for the pious Inſtructions of his Grand-mother Lois, and his Mother Eunice. And it is alſo to be obſerved of thoſe Children of religious Parents, who, having loſt ſight of the Path of Virtue in their Youth, are yet afterwards reclaimed and converted, that their former ſpeculative Acquaintance with the Truths of Chriſtianity is of no ſmall Uſe to them: whilſt others who have not enjoyed the Advantage of early Inſtruction, when they

(*) Deut. xi. 18—21 Serm. CCCLXXV. be-

become ſerious, ſtand in need of being inſtructed in the firſt Principles of the Oracles of God.

As to the laſt Objection, "They know not how to begin it:" we need ſay no more than it is to be feared, whatever Men's Pretences may be, it reſults from the Want of a firm Perſuaſion of the Truth of that Religion they profeſs. Believe your Religion—feel it—enter into the Spirit of it, and then withhold it from your Children if you can—Once diſpoſed to your Duty, you will not be long at a loſs how to perform it.

And now, from what has been ſaid in Vindication of this Duty, the Nature of it may in general be collected. We ſhall, however, add three or four important Remarks concerning it, without enlarging on them.

The Memories of Children ſhould not be overburthened, leſt their Service, which ought to be rendered agreeable to them, become tedious and irkſome. (*)

What they are taught ſhould be as fully and clearly explained to them as poſſible.

The divine Authority ſhould be brought home to every Article of Inſtruction—And their various Degrees of Importance ſhould be particularly pointed out to them. From all which it appears that great Diſcretion, as well as Zeal and Attention, is neceſſary to qualify Parents for the right Diſcharge of this Duty.

(*) See Vol. xviii. Page 321.

Sermon

SERMON CCCLXXVI.

On the same Subject.
Parents, to instruct their Children.

Ephe. vi. 4. "Fathers, provoke not your Children "to Wrath; but bring them up in the Nurture "and Admonition of the Lord."

The Right of Parents to educate their Children being already proved, – the Occasions of their Delay or Neglect of it accounted for, – and Objections removed, We proceed now to the Duties themselves, and to point out the distinct Offices of the Parents in each.

The Minority of Children is generally understood to extend to twenty-one Years. This Term may properly enough be divided into three Periods, in each of which they are to be considered in a different Light, and to be treated after a different Manner. During these Stages the more immediate Care and Tuition of them, under the Guidance of their Parents, will devolve on various Sorts of Persons.

As to the Support and Nourishment of Children, in their Infant-state, this (we have seen) lies, in a great Mea-

Meaſure, on the Mother, or ſuch Nurſes and Servants as ſhe thinks fit to appoint. But,

The Care of the Body, however important, is yet but a lower Concern. It is true, as it is the Inſtrument of the Soul, Care ſhould be taken to make it as uſefully ſubſervient to its Operations, as is poſſible. And, foraſmuch as this is not to be done without Health and a good Habit, therefore we owe a Care to the Body on theſe Accounts; becauſe if that be neglected, if it be either broken or diſordered, it will never anſwer the true Ends of our Being; but will often occaſion a diſagreeable Diſcord, inſtead of harmony in Life. For this Reaſon, the firſt and great Care in Life ſhould be, to join a ſound Mind to a ſound Body; and to preſerve both in their Perfection. And in this, the Office of each Parent is, by Nature, diſtinctly pointed out.

Their firſt Education is the Buſineſs and Care of the Mother, for the Buſineſs of the Father being for the moſt Part in his Employ, and the Man being from Education and Uſe leſs fitted for the lower Cares that are due to Children; having alſo leſs Leiſure to beſtow that Way; with leſs Gaiety to cheer and enliven their Humours, and leſs natural Tenderneſs to relieve all their little Wants and Afflictions; and having, from Nature, a ſtronger Propenſion to Sullenneſs

and

and Silence; and being upon that Account leſs fitted to gratify the eager Curioſity of Children, in their endleſs Inquiries after every thing that is new or unknown to them; for theſe Reaſons, and upon all theſe Accounts, the early Education of Children reſts almoſt entirely upon the Mother; and ſhe is in Truth, by Nature, much better fitted for it. — And,

In Order to qualify her for ſo great a Truſt, upon which the Well-being of every Family, and conſequently of the whole World, doth ſo greatly depend, it is requiſite that her Mind be rightly formed, by a thorough Acquaintance with the Scriptures, and ſome few uſeful Books of Devotion, to Humility and Meekneſs; to Temperance and Diligence; to Humanity and Charity; and, in a Word, to all the Virtues of a ſocial and a Chriſtian Life. And beſides all this, it is neceſſary that ſhe be furniſhed with a competent Knowledge in the Employments and Accompliſhments proper to each Condition and Age in Life, that ſo ſhe may be capable of directing her Children how to employ their Time agreeably and uſefully, and conduct them gradually to Virtue and Goodneſs by her Practice, as well as her Precepts.

And although the Mother's principal Buſineſs be the Education and Care of her Daughters, yet her Sons alſo claim their Part of Inſtruction and Improve-

ment at her Hands; forasmuch as they remain some Years entirely under her Tuition; and the Goodness of their Mind and Manners depends mainly upon the first Impressions they receive; upon the first Formation of them to Knowlege, to Virtue, and Piety.

And however Mothers may in these Ages be thought unequal to such a Task, they were not anciently so esteemed of, but were remarkably successful in the Education of some of the greatest Men of Antiquity.(*)

Indeed, — The Case is now in a good Measure altered, from the present Course of Education, which (as it respects the beuer Sort) depends mainly upon a Know-

(*) Ladies, some of them of the first Quality, heretofore, have been so far from thinking it any Abasement, to charge themselves with the Instruction of their own Children, that, to their Honour, they have made it Part of their Business to assist in that of other People's, particularly those who were likely to be of Consequence to the Common-Wealth—Instance only the famous *Cornelia*, the Mother of the Gracchi; and *Aurelia*, the Mother of Augustus, who did this for the Noblemen of Rome, to whom they had no Relation, but that of their common Country.

See the excellent Lecture to King Lemuel, (with good Reason believed to be Solomon) which his Mother taught him. (Prov. xxxi. 1. &c.)

These high Examples should strongly prevail with the Ladies of our Age (who call themselves Christians) to employ some of their vacant Hours and Pains, if not on Others, at least on their own Offspring. See Knox's Essays - the middle Part of No. 87. On the Folly and Wickedness of neglecting a Family and Children, for the Pleasures of Dissipation; with No. 146, of the Spectator.

Knowledge and a Maſtery in the learned Languages, which Women do not ordinarily attain to; but then, on the other Hand, it ought to be remembered, that Virtue and good Senſe are to be learnt in every Language. And foraſmuch as Morality and Religion are now much better underſtood than they were in the Heathen World, the Inſtruction of Children, in all the important Duties of Life, is now a Work of much leſs Difficulty than it antiently was. — And,

That Mothers may be the better enabled to go thro' with this great Taſk of Education, it is abſolutely neceſſary, (as before obſerved,) that they be perfectly well acquainted with the holy Scriptures, ſo as to be able to apply all the Precepts of them to all the Duties in Life; to every Purpoſe, and every Occaſion that ſhall offer; and alſo to be well verſed in the moſt uſeful and approved Treatiſes that have been publiſhed upon the Subject of Education. (*)

Thus qualified, as the Powers of Reaſon in Children gradually open and expand, the prudent Attention of the Mother will wonderfully aid the firſt Efforts of Infant Imagination. (†) One little Leſſon of Inſtruction reſpecting the Objects of Senſe, will ſucceed to another;

(*) Milton's Tractate on Education, — Mr. Lock, ditto.—the Arch-Bp. of Cambray, the Preceptor, &c.

(†) *Docet ſtudio Accipiter Pullos ſuos.* Serm. CCCLXXVI.

ther; till at length the Nature, Connection, and Uſe of moſt things about them, will come to be tolerably underſtood. And,

As the Mind is believed, by many wiſe Men, to come into the World a perfect Blank, free from all Characters of good or evil, and capable of any; and, foraſmuch as Knowledge and Virtue are its Health and Strength, therefore the next Care of a pious as well as prudent Parent will be, to inſinuate to their young Minds ſome Idea of the Greatneſs and Goodneſs of God, who made all things in Heaven and in Earth, by the Word of his Mouth, and can deſtroy them again at his Pleaſure; of that God who knoweth the Secrets of our Hearts, and ſeeth our Thoughts afar off; and will puniſh ſuch as are evil, as well as evil Actions, with dreadful Vengeance! and, on the contrary, will reward every Act and every Intention of Virtue, with Exceſs of Happineſs! and that, therefore, it is their Duty to love, ſerve, and obey him.

And, when your Children know all this, your next Care will be to teach them, as far as they are capable of learning, what Virtue and Goodneſs are; and on the contrary, what thoſe wicked Actions are which offend God, and provoke his Wrath againſt us; and then inſpire them by all poſſible Methods, with the Love of the one, and the Abhorrence of the other.

This

This Method of Inſtruction, attended with ſeaſonable Checks for what is amiſs, and Encouragements to what is good, is ſurely well adapted to the firſt ſeven Years of Life, and will in all Probability be followed with the happieſt Conſequences. (*) But I forbear; we mean only general Obſervations here.

The NEXT SEVEN Years, (the ſecond Period of Children's Minority) they fall under the more immediate Inſpection and Government of the Father. His Authority, Knowledge, and Experience, qualify him for a Kind of Exertion which the other Sex are not equal to. (‡) And their Age, Capacities, and Tempers are ſo far in Advance as to require a more ſtrict, though not

(*) There is a ſtriking, and no leſs pleaſing Paſſage in Plato's ſixth Book *de Legibus*, which exactly falls in with our Idea of the Manner in which Children ſhould be treated by their Mothers and Nurſes in their earlieſt Years. Speaking of Perſons being trained up to pray, he ſays, "They were induced to become religious by "the Stories which they heard, whilſt at the very Breaſt, from their "Nurſes and Mothers; and by what was told them, as it were in lit- "tle ſongs, ſometimes pleaſantly, and ſometimes more ſeriouſly; as "alſo by the Inſtructions they received from the Prayers of their "Parents, and which Inſtructions were held up to their very Eyes "in the Sacrifices they offered, both which the Little-Ones ſaw and "heard performed with the greateſt Pleaſure, their Parents ſacrifi- "cing with the utmoſt Attention both for themſelves and their Off- "ſpring, and addreſſing the Gods by Prayers and Supplications as "the greateſt of all Beings."

(‡) *Arist Ovium Dux eſt.* Serm. CCCLXXVI.

not untender Treatment. It will be his Buſineſs, therefore, as a wiſe and good Parent, to raiſe the Superſtructure on the Foundation the Mother has laid; to bring forward the Fruit to Perfection, the early Buds of which ſhe hath tenderly cheriſhed. His Attention will be directed to all thoſe Particulars of which we ſhall [illegible] diſcourſe more largely, [viz] Firſt,

The Virtues which Children are firſt to be taught, are, to love, and do all good Offices to all around them; to pity the Miſeries and Misfortunes of all they ſee in Affliction, and to be charitable to the Poor. And all this moſt Children are capable of learning, even before they can ſpeak: whereas, the Contrary to this is the Practice of moſt Parents, or at leaſt, of thoſe to whoſe Care they commit their Children. Wrath, Revenge, and Cruelty are the firſt Paſſions Children are taught to exert; if they fall, the Ground is to be beaten in Revenge: if any One offend them, they are taught to exclaim out ſome Expreſſions of inarticulate Rage, againſt them; if Birds, or other poor Creatures are brought to them for their Diverſion, they are to be abuſed and killed. And thus, inſtead of being early inſtructed in Meekneſs and Compaſſion, in Humanity and Good-nature, they are taught Reſentment, and Wrath, and Cruelty, in their very Cradles. Vices which, in all Probability, the beſt Inſtruction in the

the World will never be able thoroughly to subdue; and so they become Monsters of Oppression and Inhumanity to all they deal with. (*)

The next Virtue that Children are to be taught, is, Veracity; (i.e) to tell the Truth upon all Occasions; and this is a Virtue in which they will be more easily instructed, because it is a Virtue to which all Children are naturally disposed, (†) and from which most of them are warped with Difficulty. And to confirm them in this Disposition, they are to know, that this is a Virtue which God hath a peculiar Regard for; that he delighteth to be called "the God of Truth;" that Mercy and Truth are his great Attributes! that none shall abide in his Tabernacle, nor dwell in his holy Hill, but "he that speaketh the Truth from his Heart." On the other Hand, they are to be taught the utmost Dread and Abhorrence of a Lie; that the Devil is a Liar, and the Author of it; but that God hath declared

(*) The Sentence of the Areopagus, one of the wisest Assemblies of Greece, or of the World, is well worth our Attention on this Head; They condemned and passed a severe Sentence upon a Child, who diverted himself with putting out the Eyes of Quails, considering that Action as a Mark of a most detestable Disposition, which, if it were suffered to grow up with Impunity, would be pernicious to a great Number of People. See Vol. xii. Page 122, &c.

(†) *Verum ut et cetera Verbum*: Infantes et Inepti verum dicunt. Serm. CCCLXXVI.

red by the Mouth of Solomon, that "lying Lips are an Abomination unto the Lord;" and that "he that ſpeaketh Lies ſhall not eſcape."

And whereas moſt Lies are told to hide Faults, every Fault that is confeſſed with Ingenuity, and Sorrow for having committed it, ſhould be forgiven; but a Lie ſhould never be forgiven, but corrected with double Chaſtiſement, and for this plain Reaſon, becauſe it doubles every Fault that is committed, by adding known Falſehood to it. This is what Children ſhould be taught; but the very contrary to this is too often what they are taught. They are threatened and flattered into Falſehood, as ſoon as they are capable of being guilty of it. And almoſt the firſt Sentence a Child learns, after he can ſpeak, is a lying Excuſe for his Nurſe, or his Servant. If he fall or be hurted by their Negligence, he is to deny it to Death. If they have given him any Food that makes him ill, he is to deny it ſtedfaſtly, although the Lie ſhould coſt him his Life. Doubtleſs there are few who have not known ſeveral, and heard of many more Inſtances of Children, who have loſt their Limbs, and been Cripples all their Life long, by this Corruption of their Attendants. But how many thouſands have loſt their Lives in this Manner, is impoſſible to ſay. And indeed, if they only loſt their Limbs and their Lives, the Evil would be in

ſome

ſome Degree tolerable; whereas this early Habit of Lying depraves the Mind beyond any other whatſoever! and betrays Children into ſo much Impudence and Effrontery, as makes them hardened to every Virtue, and obſtinate in every Vice; and of Conſequence muſt end, too often, in their eternal Ruin.

To this we owe that Stedfaſtneſs in Falſehood, conſpicuous in the Characters of ſome Men; Men that allow themſelves in the vileſt and moſt villanous Falſehoods, that can any Way contribute to increaſe their Gain, or hide their Guilt; to maſk and diſguiſe their Hypocriſy, and raiſe the Reputation of their Righteouſneſs! and though they ſhould be inſtantly detected, and expoſed even to numerous Aſſemblies, this makes no Change in their Conduct; for the Hypocrite's whole Life is one continued Lie; you may confute, but you cannot confound him. They receive your Correction with ſuch a placid Compoſure, with ſuch a Meekneſs and Humility in Hypocriſy, that you can ſcarce believe your Senſes to their Diſadvantage; how is it poſſible ſuch meek, ſuch diſintereſted, ſuch ſanctified Men, ſhould be Villains? and indeed, it would be hard to account for it, were we not informed by the Spirit of God, that the great Father of Lies can, upon Occaſion, transform himſelf into an Angel of Light.

Another Duty which Children ſhould be early

taught, and which perhaps will be the beſt Guardian of their Veracity, and every other Virtue, is an awful Regard and high Veneration for the Name and Honour of God! for this will eſtabliſh a high Senſe of the divine Power and Majeſty in the Minds of Children, when they underſtand that his Name is not to be mentioned but with Awe and Reverence. And yet, (ſorry we are to ſay it,) the direct Contrary to this is the Practice of the World; and the very firſt Words Children are often taught to pronounce, is ſome Profanation of the Name of God, in Oaths or Imprecations.

"The Fear of the Lord (ſaith Solomon) is the Beginning of Wiſdom." Children are influenced into Duty by the Impreſſions of Fear, even before the Uſe of Reaſon: and therefore, the Fear of God ſhould be inculcated as early and as deeply as poſſible; as the ſureſt Means to inſpire them with Caution and Conſideration, which are the ſure Foundations of Wiſdom and Virtue, and the beſt Guardians againſt Error and Impiety; whereas, when Children have got early Habits of profaning the Name of God, they immediately loſe all Senſe of Fear towards him; and with that, all Senſe of Religion and Virtue! and ſo become utterly profligate, and abandoned to all Vice and Villany! inſomuch that it is to be believed, there ſcarcely ever was one Inſtance of any Child, who was early allowed

lowed to curse and swear, that ever became a good Man, to the last Day of his Life.

The next Virtue in which we would have Children instructed, is Humility. A Virtue this, of all others, the best to prepare them for all the cross Accidents and Calamities they are sure to meet with in Life, and will give them the truest Sense of their own Corruption, and Weakness, and Vanity; and of Consequence, will dispose them to Contentment and Resignation, under all the Dispensations and Chastisements of the divine Providence. And this is a Virtue, which the Modesty of their tender Years will incline and enable them to practise with Ease; whereas, in the common Course of Education, they are carefully initiated into the contrary Vice, and are taught Pride with as much Diligence as if it were the most important Duty in Life; and, as if the Delay of so excellent an Institution were of dangerous Consequence, they take care to begin with it betimes, and instruct them in it as soon as they are capable of discerning their own Figure in the Glass, and then is the Imagination of the poor young Creature bewildered with all the Gaieties that Vanity can invent: Fineries, and Fopperies of all Kinds and Colours are crowded together to adorn the tender Clay; and the vain Imagination of one, if not both Parents, is stretched, to dispose and vary all these to Ad-

vantage, that the poor little Pageant may, by all Means, be early taught to ſet a right Value upon its Perſon; and to diſtinguiſh itſelf from other Children, whoſe Parents have leſs Fortune or Foppery than its own. The Conſequence from all this is, that ſo fine a Creature cannot bear to go into a cold dirty School, or mix with a Herd of tattered Children; and ſo is kept at Home, for Fear of ſpoiling its fine Clothes, or its fine Complexion. And by this Means, its little Head is in a very little Time ſo entirely filled with ſuch fine Ideas of Dreſs, and Faſhion, and Vanity, that there is no Room left for any thing good or uſeful ever after. If the Child be of the female Sex, it is odds, but ſhe is committed, perhaps truſted entirely, to the Care of an ignorant and fanatic Servant; who, if ſhe hath the good Fortune to be born a Foreigner, is from that ſole Advantage, without the Recommendation of any one uſeful Talent in Life, too often thought qualified to educate Children of the higheſt Condition; and will take ſpecial Care never to ſpoil the fine Eyes of her Pupil, either with Work or Reading, never to moleſt her Mind either with the low troubleſome Knowledge of Family-affairs, or with the Severities of Religion and Virtue; will teach her to ſpeak a foreign Language with great Eaſe and Volubility, perhaps without knowing how to read her own; and, what is infinitely worſe, will

will be too apt to unteach her the aukward unfaſhionable Virtues of Modeſty and Reſerve; will let her underſtand, that Bluſhing is the higheſt Crime ſhe can be guilty of; and that ſhe ought to be aſhamed of nothing, but being out of Countenance, or out of Faſhion; in a Word, will make her a complete, perhaps a perverted Woman, before ſhe knows what it is to be a Child.

If the Child happen to be of the Male Kind, it is odds, but a French Tutor will do as much by him. I would by no Means be underſtood to mean any Reflection on that great Nation, which hath produced ſo many Men of Eminence in every Branch of uſeful Knowledge. We cenſure nothing but our own Folly, in too often chooſing the meaneſt of that Nation, for the moſt important Office in Life, the Education of our Children. Theſe are Men who, from their Skill in outward Ornaments, are too often choſen, to infuſe inward Accompliſhments; Men, unable perhaps, in their own Country, to procure a Subſiſtence, or, thro' Vice and Profligacy, forced from it, are Fugitives here, unknown, to riot and flouriſh on our Credulity; who will carry their Pupils thro' all the faſhionable Amuſements, Routs & Aſſemblies, Play-houſes, Taverns, &c.; into which they call the Knowledge of the World; without paſſing thro' the tedious Round of claſſical Inſtruction in Books and Languages, and the ſeveral Diſci-

pline of Study; and without incumbering their fine Heads with the Lumber and Pedantry of Arts and Sciences, invnice & curious Philosophical Researches.

Such is that detestable Education, by which many of the best Fortunes and Families among us are too early corrupted and cramped, to the Reproach and Calamity of our Country? Men well known, and sufficiently distinguished in all Places of public Resort, except the Church, the Senate, and the Courts of Justice; for in the first of these they are rarely seen, at least to any good Purpose, and in the test as rarely heard. And although some, by the Force of a better Genius, and the Influence of the divine Grace, may break through the Prejudices of so unhappy an Education, yet these are but few and rare, in Comparison of the mighty Numbers that are utterly undone by it.

Another Virtue that should be early and carefully taught Children, is Justice; and that Equity and Honesty in our Dealings, which is prescribed by this Virtue, is so very agreeable to the first Rudiments of Reason, that Children are very early capable of it. And to give them a high Veneration for this Virtue, (which is the Shield of Right, and the Bond of Peace,) they are to be taught that it is of high Value in the Sight of God; that Justice and Judgment are the Habitation of his Throne; and that He hath, in his holy Word, promised

promised great and lasting Blessings upon those that practise this Virtue from the Heart. That "God blesseth the Habitation of the Just;" that they are under his immediate Care and Protection; that he hath promised that "no Evil shall happen unto them;" and that "He will deliver them from Trouble."

On the other Hand, they are to be inspired with the utmost Detestation and Abhorrence of all Fraud and Iniquity in their Dealings. They are to be taught, that every Degree of these Vices are Marks of the meanest and basest Minds! that there is as much Villany in defrauding a School-fellow of a Trifle, as in robbing him of any thing of greater Value; for if a Child be allowed to do Injustice in a Trifle, he will be much more tempted to it when he can gain considerably by it. And therefore he is to be taught, that this is a Vice which will render him despicable, as well as hateful, in the Eyes of the World; and doubly odious in the Sight of God; that "false Weights and false Measures are an Abomination to him;" that if "any Man defraud his Brother, God hath declared himself a Revenger of all such;" that he hath declared, that "neither Thieves, nor Extortioners, shall inherit the Kingdom of God." Your Children are to be early and carefully taught, that nothing under Heaven can justify any Degree of Fraud or Iniquity in their Dealings;

that no Pretence, even of good Intentions or pious Purposes whatsoever, can sanctify wicked Means; that "we must by no Means do Evil, that Good may come;" and that the Spirit of God hath expresly declared of all that do so, (by the Mouth of his holy Apostle,) that their "Damnation is just." That God himself hath declared by the Mouth of his Prophet "that he hateth Robbery, though it were for a Burnt-offering." (*) And, above all, they should be carefully taught, that of all Robberies, they are the most heinous, the most hateful, the most abhorred of God, which have the Spoils of the Widow and the Orphan for their Object. The helpless Orphan, the sickly, the aged, the desolated Widow: O Lord, righteous and just, how just are thy Judgments, which thou hast pronounced against their Oppressors in thy holy Writ! "Oppress not the Widow, nor the Fatherless, nor the Poor," saith Zechariah. And he observeth of all that [illegible], that "they made their Hearts as an Adamant-stone, lest they should hear the Law, and the Words [illegible] hath sent in his Spirit by the [illegible]. Therefore came a great Wrath from the Lord of Hosts: therefore it came to pass, that as he cried, and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the Lord of Hosts."

"Woe to him that spoileth, and thou wast not spoiled

(*) See Note (‡), Page [illegible]

(saith

(ſaith Iſaiah); and dealeſt treacherouſly, and they dealt not treacherouſly with thee." — "Rob not the Poor, (ſaith Solomon) becauſe he is poor; neither oppreſs the afflicted in the Gate; for the Lord will plead their Cauſe, and ſpoil the Souls of thoſe that ſpoil them."

Sermon

SERMON CCCLXXVII.

On the same Subject.

Parents, to instruct their Children.

Ephe. vi. 4. "Fathers, provoke not your Children "to Wrath; but bring them up in the Nurture "and Admonition of the Lord."

Having already considered the principal Virtues in which Children are early to be instructed, I shall now proceed to consider those, which may, we think, be properly called secondary or ministerial Virtues, as being subservient to Virtues of greater Consequence, and higher Excellence than themselves: and the chief of these are Temperance, Obedience, Modesty, Civility, and Industry.

As to the first of these, we are certain that Temperance is, and hath ever been, accounted a chief Virtue; nor is it any Part of our Intention to lessen its Dignity; but only to observe, that as it is subservient to higher Purposes than bare Abstinence from Excess; and is indeed necessary to the Exercise of every other Virtue; therefore it may not improperly be termed ministerial: and

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it is certain, that wise Men have ever esteemed Temperance so necessary both to Health and Virtue, that some have gone so far, as to enjoin it strictly to the breeding Parent; that so the Child may come into the World in some Measure influenced by this Habit, or at least, properly prepared for it. All Physicians agree, that the plainest and simplest Foods are best fitted to young and tender Digestion, and are attended with less Danger of Surfeit and Excess, and of Consequence are more safe and salutary; and all Philosophers agree, that Temperance is the truest Foundation of every Virtue and good Habit in the Mind; and if so, it is evident to common Sense, that this Foundation cannot be laid too early; and therefore Parents cannot be too careful in avoiding all Seasonings, and Heightenings of Taste in their Children's Food, which cannot fail of having ill Effects upon their Health, and giving them an early Turn to Luxury, the Nurse of every Vice, and every Corruption, to which the human Nature is prone! Luxury, our National Reproach and Ruin! to which we owe, among infinite other Evils, the immeasurable Use of that too fashionable and pernicious Plant, which weakens the Stomach, unbraces the Nerves, and drains the very Vitals of our national Wealth; to which nevertheless our Children are as early, and as carefully trained, from the very Breast,

as if the daily Use of it were an indispensable Duty which they owed to God and their Country.

The next ministerial Virtue which Children should be early taught, is Obedience; and it is sufficiently known, that this is always the first Duty inculcated by that Order of Men, which hath hitherto been most eminent for Education of Youth. "Children, obey your Parents in all things (saith the Apostle); for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord." And doubtless, nothing can be more agreeable to the God of Order, and Fountain of all Virtue, and all Felicity, than this Submission of Children to their natural Superiors and Guardians; which is the best early Guardian of their Health, the best Security of their Virtue, and Source of their Happiness; it being evident, that in the ordinary Course of things, nothing can be more reasonable, or of greater Use to Children, than a ready undisputing Submission to the Will of their Parents; they being, from the Advantage of more Age and Experience better Judges of what they ought to do or avoid. And therefore this Obedience should have no Limitation or Reserve, except where the Parent is found to command something contrary to the Law of God; in THAT Case, and in THAT ONLY, the Child's Obedience is to be dispensed with; in all others, to be steadily and uniformly exacted, without admitting the least Debate or Hesitation;

tion; than which nothing can be of worſe Conſequence, either to the Peace of the Parent, or the Virtue and Well-being of the Child; the ſame Spirit that is reſtive to the Authority of the Parent, will in Time be refractory to that of the Magiſtrate, and rebellious even to that of Almighty God; and will at the ſame Time, in all Probability, degenerate into an offenſive Rudeneſs, or an unſociable Sullenneſs to the reſt of the World. And Parents ſhould ſubdue this Spirit early and effectually, if they expect their Children ſhould become good Sons, good Subjects, or good Chriſtians. And the true Way to do this, is, by carefully avoiding all cruel, unjuſt, and wicked Commands, and exacting a ſevere and ſteady Obedience to all others. And theſe, in a prudent and good Parent, muſt often be ſuch as will ſhew the Child his own Intereſt and Happineſs, in the Obedience he yieldeth to them; altho neither of theſe, neither his Intereſt nor his Happineſs, ſhould ever by any Means be made the Rules or Meaſures of his Obedience, (becauſe there are infinite Inſtances, in which it is impoſſible he can either diſcern or judge of them): no; this muſt be entirely reſolved into the Parent's Right to rule; the natural Pleaſure of a dutiful Subminſſion to their Authority; and the comfortable Aſſurance of a Bleſſing from God, upon their cheerful and conſcientious Obedience. Ano-

Another Virtue that Parents are carefully to cultivate in their Children, is Modeſty. By Modeſty we mean, not that outward Demureneſs and Artifice of Face; that affected Guiſe and Phraſe of Humility which Impudence often aſſumes, and Hypocriſy always: the Maſk of Fraud, and Harbinger of Deceit! that meek un-bluſhing Aſſurance, which diſtinguiſhes the ſmooth and ſaintly Phariſee; that ſmooths his Phraſe, and humbles his Eyes, with all the Arts, and to all the Purpoſes of Deluſion! of whom the Pſalmiſt ſo juſtly obſerves, that "there is no Faithfulneſs in his Mouth; their Throat is an open Sepulchre; they flatter with their Tongue." No: true Modeſty ariſes from a juſt Senſe of Decency and Duty, and beſt ſhews itſelf in a Becomingneſs of Behaviour, and due Deference to the reſt of the World, according to their ſeveral Relations and Stations in it; equally removed from Fawning and from Falſehood: and of this we need ſay little more, than that it is at once the greateſt Ornament of Youth, and the beſt Guardian of Virtue. It is that natural Check, which it hath pleaſed God to lay upon every thing, that is either vicious, or unruly, or even indecent in our Nature.

And of how much Value this Virtue is in the Sight of God, is evident from the Care which He hath taken of it in the very Formation of our Frame. The Fluſh-

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ing of the Blood in the Face, upon the Conſciouſneſs of having violated this Virtue, or even upon the leaſt Apprehenſion of being in Danger of violating it, is one of the moſt amazing Phænomina among all the Wonders of our Make: for what is this, in Effect, but his declaring to us, that we ſhall never offend againſt this Virtue, without publiſhing our Shame to all about us? what is it, but making the very Blood itſelf the Guardian of it? and this, in a Manner, equally aſtoniſhing and inexplicable? flaſhing the Blood into the Face, by Channels that never were found out; and by a Power that never was or will be accounted for: and the plain Reaſon why this Virtue is ſo guarded, is of ſuch vaſt Importance in the Sight of God, is this; it is the Guardian of every Virtue; it is the Mechaniſm of our Frame, what Prudence is in our Minds, the Power that ſways, and guides, and governs, all the other Virtues. Take away Prudence from the Mind, and there is no Virtue left: take away Modeſty from our Make, and the Conſequence will, in Effect, be the ſame: this once removed, the Mind becomes the eaſy Prey of every Paſſion, every Vice, and every evil Tendency in our Nature. This once removed, every Spark of Evil, before latent in the Soul, blazes out into a Flame, and devours all Worth and Virtue before it: and therefore there is not a more lovely, or more

important Office of the Parental Care, than to be ſtrict and diligent Guardians of the Modeſty of their Children; than to keep them at the utmoſt Diſtance from every thing that hath the leaſt Appearance even of Indecency, and much more of Impudence, Impiety, or Immorality of any Kind. And yet the very Contrary to this is too notoriouſly the Practice of many Parents; who take a ſinful Pleaſure, in teaching their Children the worſt Words, and moſt vicious and impudent Forms of Speech, as ſoon as they are able to ſpeak. "Folly (ſaith Solomon) is Joy to him that is deſtitute of Wiſdom:" and is it poſſible there can be a greater Exceſs of Folly, than for Parents thus to delight in the Deſtruction of their own Children? This is ſo ſhocking a Conduct, that it is incapable of Aggravation; and therefore we ſhall only obſerve of it, that theſe Men act as if they were afraid their Children's own natural Inclinations, their Parents Example, and the Corruptions of the World, would all come too late to make them Reprobates! and ripe for Perdition! and therefore they take early Pains to eſtabliſh their Guilt, and to inſure their Damnation betimes.

Another Duty Parents owe their Children is, to teach them that Civility, which is commonly known by the Name of Good-Manners—an Accompliſhment which introduces Youth more early, and to more Advantage,

vantage, into the World, than any other whatsoever; and oftentimes recommends them more effectually to the Favour and Protection of the Great, than many other Qualities of more inherent Excellence, because it is the only one by which they can be obliged or served. In a Word, It is an easy, a natural, and an universal Introduction to the Regard of Mankind; and if it be supported by real Worth, cannot fail to fix us in their Esteem.

And this Civility, which we call Good-Manners, is a Duty founded at once, both in Justice and Necessity. No Man is self-sufficient, but hath frequent and endless Occasions for the Assistance and good Offices of others; and no Man is so strictly bound by any Law either of God or Society, to do good Offices to others to the full Extent of his Power, but that he hath at the same Time a Right to some Returns of Gratitude and Acknowledgment. And in this Conduct, in requesting the Favours and good Offices of others with a becoming Deference; in a Readiness and Cheerfulness to do good Offices to others, with a Thankfulness for being so employed; and, lastly, in a thankful and ready Acknowledgment of all good Offices done to ourselves; in these consist the Essentials of Civility, and what we truly and properly call Good-Manners: — the Courtly Phrase, the Courtesy, and the Bow, and the

friendly Salutation, are but its outward Garb, Indication, and Ornament. Let me be understood upon this Point, which is, in Truth, very little understood in the World. Altho every Man hath a Right, from our natural Equality, to a fair unoffending Treatment from every other; yet no Man hath an absolute Right to the Aid of others in any Exigency; and therefore, when he wants it, he is obliged to sue for it, in a modest Phrase, and submissive Demeanour; and when he hath received it, he is to return Thanks, in a Style suitable to the Favour received: and, therefore, the Man that is void of Good-Manners, is at the same Time void both of Gratitude and Justice; he expects what he hath not a Right to; and he pays not what he owes. So that Ill-manners is, in Truth, a lower Kind of Immorality; it is Injustice and Dishonesty in a less Degree; and if it be neglected there, may rise, and become conspicuous in a higher.

Another Virtue in which Children are to be carefully instructed, and to which they are to be early inured, is Patience; which teaches us to bear Evil with Equanimity, and humble Resignation to the Will of God; by whom all Events are governed, and without whom not so much as a Sparrow falleth to the Earth.

Forasmuch then as it is well known, that all Evils are increased by Impatience, and abated by Equanimity

ty and Resignation; therefore it is obvious, at first Sight, of what Importance the Value of Patience must be, in a World thoroughly passed with Evil.

The Instances under which this Virtue is to be exercised are as endless as the Calamities of Life; and therefore it cannot be too early, too often, or too carefully inculcated. However, I shall at present content myself with recommending one small Part of it to the Consideration of all Parents and Tutors; and that is, Patience of Solitude; early to habituate their Children and Pupils to bear being alone.

The Advantages of this Habit are obvious, and need hardly to be mentioned. 1st. They will by this Means learn to think, to reflect, and to converse with their own Thoughts and Hearts. 2dly, They will soon get the better of those instinctive Fears of Solitude, which, however wisely impressed, (in Aid of that Period of Life which most needs the Protection of others,) are too apt to degenerate into umorous Superstitions; which impair all the Powers of Reason, and often make Life a Load. And 3dly, It will guard them from those infinite Evils which Men daily run into, to banish Solitude, and kill Time; such as evil Conversation, and idle Pursuits and Habits of all Kinds.

Another Duty in which Children are early to be instructed, and exercised, is Industry in some honest and

uſeful Occupation; the Children of poor Parents, in ſome Rudiments or lower Branch of ſome uſeful Trade, as the Foundation of a future Livelihood; — and the Children of thoſe of better Condition, in endowing and adorning their Minds with thoſe Habits of Knowledge and Virtue, which will beſt become their Station and Condition in the World, and make them a Bleſſing to all below them. (*)

Early Induſtry is the beſt Security in the World againſt vicious Habits. When this is neglected, Men eaſily become a Prey to Sloth and Idleneſs; which are the Parents of every Vice, and the Bane of every thing good and excellent. (†)

Having

(*) "The whole Life (ſay the Chineſe Philoſophers) depends "upon Care and Induſtry; the Year on the Spring; the Day on "riſing early. He who in his Youth is not diligent and aſſiduous "in his Studies, when Old-age cometh, will be a Fool, and find "himſelf empty-handed; He who in Spring will not till, in Autumn "ſhall not reap."

(†) We cannot help taking notice, here, of that noble Inſtitution of Solon, that great Athenian Law-giver, which decreed, that every Child that refuſed or neglected to ſupport his Parents, when Age or Infirmities called for their Aſſiſtance, ſhould be branded with Infamy, and deprived of all the Privileges of Society; but with this Limitation, provided the Parents took care to breed up their Children to ſome uſeful Trade or Occupation; which if they neglected, their Children were then acquitted of all Obligation to provide for them in their Need.

Having thus laid before you the ſeveral Parts of the Parents Duty to their Children, and explained very particularly the ſeveral prime Virtues in which they are to be inſtructed; and alſo what thoſe leſſer Virtues are, (in which they are to be exerciſed) called the leſſer or miniſterial Morals, but at the ſame Time the ſure Guardians of the greater; I proceed to conſider the Means (beſides what we have already conſidered *) neceſſary to be made uſe of, in Order more effectually to inculcate and confirm thoſe Virtues in their Hearts.

And, firſt, all Parents are particularly to remember, that as ſoon as their Children have paſſed through the firſt Rudiments of Learning, and are able to read, they ſhould THEN be carefully taught ſome ſhort Syſtem of the Chriſtian Religion, ſuch as that excellent Summary of Chriſtian Doctrines and Duties contained in the Church Catechiſm (‡); not only to get them by Heart, but in a rational intelligent Way; and, in Order to this, the Queſtions and Anſwers ſhould be varied and explained, and the Children ſhould be obliged to give the Meaning of them in other Words; and, at laſt, to add the Proofs from Scripture. And this they will be enabled to do, by the Help of ſome ſhort and uſeful Ex-

(*) In Reproof, - Page 166, &c. — and Example, - Page 190, &c.

(‡) See Note (‡), Vol. xviii. Page 321.

Explanations of the Catechism, published for that Purpose; (*) but above all, the Scriptures are to be read frequently and constantly; those Parts especially and primarily, which contain an Account of the wonderful Works and Judgments of God; such as the Creation, the Deluge, the Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha, and the Deliverance from the Egyptian Bondage; and above all, the Life and Miracles of our Blessed Saviour, and his Apostles. For these being in their own Nature extraordinary, and at the same Time conveyed to us in the noblest, the most instructive, and the most delightful Relations this World was ever blessed with, will be read with Pleasure, and remembered with Ease and will at the same Time give your Children strong and awful Notions of the infinite Power, Wisdom, and Goodness of God, together with a deep Veneration of his Justice and Judgments upon presumptuous and impenitent Sinners: and, in Consequence of this, will impress a strong Awe and Dread of offending and provoking the divine Wrath and Indignation against us.

After this, they are carefully to peruse and revolve those solemn and devotional Parts of the holy Scriptures, which set forth, in the most moving and exalted Strains, the Mercy and Might, and Majesty of Almighty God; such as the Psalms of David, and the Prophecies of Isaiah, and the Life, Suffering, and Sub-

(*) By Wake, — Secker, &c.

miſſion of Job: and, laſtly, they are to be well and often inſtructed and exerciſed in the Eccleſiaſtes and Proverbs of Solomon, which contain at once the plaineſt and wiſeſt Precepts that ever were delivered for the Conduct of Life, both with Regard to this World, and the World to come. Theſe are to be perpetually peruſed, and perfectly remembered: and by being ſo, will be a ſure and laſting Fund of Direction, Conſolation, and Support, on all Occaſions, and throughout all Emergencies in Life.

Another Means, is, the alluring Children to a cheerful Attendance on divine Worſhip.

In the Phraſe of Divine Worſhip, we include the Duties of private, family, and public Devotion. The Obligations of Men in general to theſe Duties, muſt, at preſent, be taken for granted. The Queſtion here is, How Children are to be initiated into them?

As to private Prayer, Morning and Evening, they ſhould be early taught the Reaſonableneſs and Importance of it. In their younger Days it may be proper to aſſiſt them with plain, ſhort, expreſſive Forms, ſuited to their Age and Capacities, of which we have ſome very admirable Ones in our Language. But the main thing is to make them ſenſible of their Wants, and of their Dependence upon the Providence and Grace of God for the Supply of them. Theſe Sentiments deep-

ly impreſſed upon their Hearts will have a mighty Effect to impel them to their Duty. And their other Exerciſes and Amuſements ſhould be ſo arranged, as that they may have Opportunity for Retirement at the propoſed Seaſons: while at the ſame Time they are inſtructed, that THAT Worſhip which is acceptable to God, muſt be free and cordial, not the Effect of Compulſion; humble and modeſt, and not the Reſult of Shew and Oſtentation.

As to family and public Worſhip, we ſhall diſcourſe more largely in their proper Places, and have therefore only to add here, that Children ſhould be required to attend regularly and ſeriouſly upon them, and that theſe Services ſhould be ſo conducted as to render them as little tedious as poſſible. But I muſt not omit mentioning in this Place the vaſt Importance of praying frequently and earneſtly with them, for the Bleſſing of God on all our Inſtructions and Counſels; and of ſetting them Examples, by our daily Tempers and Conduct, of genuine Virtue, and of cheerful and unaffected Piety.

Having thus conſidered at large, how Children are to be led gradually through the whole Series of Chriſtian and moral Duties; I have only to add, that, when they are early and long practiſed in them, the Motions of Duty and Virtue will then become as eaſy and

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as familiar to them, as thoſe of Nature: or, to ſpeak more properly, Cuſtom will make them Nature; and they will practiſe them with as little Difficulty, as they walk or breathe.

To Conclude this Head: St. Paul, who well knew how much depends on a virtuous and religious Education, recommends it as the great and leading Duty, including, as it were, and comprehending every other.

He indeed, who regularly and conſcientiouſly performs this, will not often be found deficient in any of the reſt; it is ſcarce probable, that he who knows and teaches the Principles of Chriſtianity, ſhould himſelf be deficient in any of thoſe Virtues which we have here enumerated.

It is not in the Power of every Man to provide for his Children with Regard to the good things of this Life, in the Manner he would wiſh, or they, perhaps, deſerve; his own Circumſtances may be too narrow to make their's eaſy; his own Intereſt, Merit, or Abilities too ſmall and inconſiderable, to recommend them to powerful Favour and Protection: but, it is in every Man's Power to "bring up his Children in the Fear of the Lord," to form their Minds to the Practice of Virtue, and inſtill into them, as early as poſſible, the Principles of Religion and Morality. – And ſurely,

If Parents had but that juſt Share of Tenderneſs

and Affection for their Children, which Nature requires, and the Scripture enjoines, if they did but look upon them as LITTLE Parts of themselves, they could not fail but acquaint them with the things which belong to their everlasting Welfare. (*)

If the Season of Youth be neglected, how little Probability is there of good Fruit afterwards; — This is the moulding Age. What we NOW make them, they will, in all Probabliiy, be forever after. — Besides,

There is none in the Wolrd so likely as Parents to be the Instruments of the eternal good of their Children. They have peculiar Advantages that none others have; as, the Intereft they have in their Affections,

(*) Parents, or those to whom the Education of Children is committed, will do well to consider the following Particulars.

First, How near the Relation is betwixt them and their Children; and therefore how much they are concerned in their Happiness and Misery. Consider but the Scripture-Account of such Relations, expressed, 1st. by longing for them, - Gen. xv. 2.—ditto, xxx. 1. Secondly, by our Joy when we have them - John xvi. 22. Thirdly, by our sympathising with them in all their Troubles, Mark ix. 22. And fourthly, by our Sorrow at parting, - Gen. xxxvii. 35.

Now, shall all this be to no Purpose? For, to what End do we desire them before we have them—rejoice in them when we have them—sympathise with them so tenderly—and grieve for their Death so excessively, if, in the mean Time, no Care be taken, what shall become of them to all Eternity?

Quid dulcius Hominum Generi a Naturâ datum est, quàm sui cuique Liberi?

tions, – the Opportunities to inſtill Knowledge into them, being daily with them, together with the Knowledge of their Tempers. Therefore, if Parents neglect, who ſhall help them?

Give them, then, ſuch good Inſtructions as you find in the Holy Scriptures, remember them of God's Commands; admoniſh them, from thence, with the Spirit of Meekneſs, to take-heed to their Ways, how they tranſgreſs the Laws of God, by diſobeying their Parents Commands, when juſt and reaſonable.

Lay but, at firſt, this good Foundation in their Minds, and you may build upon it forever after; it will hold when all other things fail; and will, itſelf, forward all Conſiderations beſides.

Piety ſtrengthens the Bond of filial, as well as of every other Duty: – thoſe who have been "brought up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord," will moſt probably repay their Parent's Care and Attention, by Love and Gratitude towards them; – It is, therefore, their higheſt Intereſt, as well as indiſpenſible Duty, to inſtruct their Children in Religion; to acquaint them with the Ways of God; to explain to them the Doctrine of Chriſt, and the Terms of Salvation by him; and to pray earneſtly for them, (*) as all the

(*) Plato ſays, that Fathers, thoſe living Images of God, have a great deal of Force and Efficacy to bring down all Sorts of Bleſſings upon

the Pains they take in this Way will be amply recompenſed; and the Gift which they beſtow, be returned ſeven-fold into their Boſom. (*)

upon their Children, who render them the Honour which is due; and to make the moſt tremendous Curſes fall upon their Heads, when they fail therein; for God hears the Prayers which Parents addreſs to him, either for or againſt their Children.

(*) As the Vexations which Men receive from their Children, haſten the Approach of Age, and double the Force of Years; ſo the Comforts which they reap from them, are Balm to all their other Sorrows, and diſappoint the Injuries of Time. — Parents repeat their Lives in their Offspring, and their Concern for them is ſo near, that they feel all their Sufferings, and taſte all their Enjoyments, as much as if they regarded their own proper Perſons.

Sermon

SERMON CCCLXXVIII.

On the ſame Subject.

Parents, to provide for their Children.

Eph. vi. 4. "Fathers, provoke not your Children "to Wrath; but bring them up in the Nurture "and Admonition of the Lord."

The advanced Steps we have gained in this Subject, (reſpecting the Health, Form, Support, and Inſtruction of Children; together with the beſt Means to perform theſe important Offices,) lead us now to the next Duty of Parents, [viz] to provide for them. But, before we proceed immediately on this Head, I would rectify the too generally miſtaken Notion and Practice of Parents, in this Caſe.

The proper Object and End of Inſtruction is, no Doubt, the real Welfare of our Children. Now, their Welfare is to be conſidered in its Reference to this Life, and That which is to come.

Firſt, As to the PRESENT Life.

Mankind differ in their Opinions reſpecting worldly Happineſs. But whatever Opinion Men adopt on this

this Head will have no ſmall Influence on the Education they give their Children. If, for Inſtance, Wealth is the Parent's MAIN Object, to that Object he will aſſiduouſly direct the Attention of his Children. He will carefully innure them to Habits of Courage, Application and Perſeverance. He will diligently inſtruct them in the Principles and Arts of Trade and Commerce. And he will not fail to lead them into Connections that may ſubſerve his lucrative Views. But then, alas! amidſt all theſe Pains to form them for the Acquiſition of Wealth and Power, Leſſons of infinitely greater Importance to their real Comfort, Honour, and Uſefulneſs in Life, will be over-looked and neglected.

A wiſe and good Parent, however, will not act after this Manner. He will indeed, as well as the other, endeavour to inſpire his Children with Sentiments of Prudence, Reſolution & Induſtry: but then, conſidering that "a Man's Happineſs conſiſts not in the Abundance he hath," but depends on the Manner in which it is acquired and the Uſe to which it is applied, it will be his main Object to impreſs their Minds with Sentiments of Juſtice, Truth, Contentment, Temperance, and Benevolence. He will carefully guard them againſt falſe Maxims of worldly Policy. He will prudently check the wild Efforts of lawleſs Ambition. He will reſolutely bridle their eager Love of Pleaſure.

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He will ſeriouſly forewarn them of the Diſappointments they may be likely to meet with. And he will take the utmoſt Pains to initiate them in the true Secret of worldly Felicity, which lies in the Suitableneſs of a Man's Situation to his natural Caſt, in the moderate Uſe of temporal Enjoyments, in doing-good, and in the Subſervience of his outward Circumſtances to the more important Intereſts of his Soul. In a Word, it will be his Concern to lead them into ſuch Connections and ſuch only, as will be favourable to theſe truly juſt and noble Views. And thus, ſtudiouſly directing their Feet into the Path Providence has marked out, he will ſeek real Happineſs for them, and not the ſplendid Appearance of it.

And now, if this Reaſoning, and this Mode of Education be right, it is of the laſt Conſequence that the Minds of Parents be well made up upon the great Queſtion of the true Nature of worldly Happineſs. Nor will any thing more effectually contribute to this than a thorough Acquaintance with Religion. Which leads me to ſpeak of it in its Reference,

Thirdly, To a future Life.

We believe that there is a World to come, in which the Righteous will be happy, and the Wicked miſerable. Now this Idea reflects great Importance upon the preſent Life, and conſequently upon the Du-

ty before us. For, if Men are to be dealt with after Death according to their proper Characters, and if Education hath an Influence in forming their Characters, then certainly much depends upon it. But this we mention here, not as an Argument to perſuade Parents to their Duty, (for in this View we ſhall urge it hereafter,) but as a Rule to guide them in the conducting this important Buſineſs: and its Uſe to this End is very great. For,

If we are perſuaded of the Truths already mentioned, and have our Children's Intereſt at Heart; it will be our firſt and grand Object to inſtil Principles of Virtue in them; to perſuade them of the Certainty of a future State, and to inſtruct them in the true and only Way of obtaining Forgiveneſs and Acceptance with God. Having this great Buſineſs of their everlaſting Happineſs, in chief View, we ſhall ſo control our Paſſions, and ſo regulate our Conduct towards them in Regard of their worldly Affairs, as to ſecure them from much real Evil, and procure for them much real Good. We ſhall not ſeek great things for them, or be eagerly deſirous of their filling Stations of Splendour and Dignity, well-knowing that ſhould they attain theſe Objects, they would be expoſed to imminent Temptation and Danger. We ſhall be watchful of their Connections, not ſuffering any worldly Proſpects to draw them into

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an Acquaintance with the Deſpiſers of Religion; but, on the contrary, uſing our utmoſt Endeavours to allure them into Habits of Friendſhip with thoſe who fear God. Our Inſtructions, Counſels, Reproofs, and Encouragements, receiving their Direction from this great Point, will be all likely to have the moſt ſalutary Effect.

But if we ſuppoſe a Man an Infidel, or at leaſt indifferent about the final State of his Children in another World, is it imaginable that he will fulfil the Duties of a Parent? No: he will fail not only in the moſt eſſential Matters, but in thoſe too which relate to their temporal Welfare. As to Inſtructions of a religious Kind, they will be wholly neglected. And more than this, Morality itſelf will be no more regarded than as it may be ſubſervient to their worldly Intereſts. And even here, ſince Wealth and Splendour are his only Objects, and theſe are too often acquired by indirect Means, he will not be over-rigorous in inculcating the Duties of Truth, Juſtice, and Temperance. And thus Children led up into Life, without any Regard to their State in a future World, will be left to the Mercy of their depraved Paſſions—Paſſions which have acquired Strength from the Connivance, if not Indulgence, of ſuch a miſerably defective Education. Who can forbear bewailing the State of ſuch Children, and deteſting the Conduct of ſuch Parents?

And here I cannot paſs on without obſerving, what a ſtrong preſumptive Argument ariſes from the Light in which we have placed this Matter, in Favour of the Truth of Religion. It is agreed on all Hands, that Morality is of the laſt Importance to the Well-being of Society. It is likewiſe acknowledged that Education is of the greateſt Uſe to form the Morals of Youth, and prepare them for the Part they are to act on the Stage of Life. And it further appears from what has been ſaid, that Religion, by clearly teaching us wherein our trueſt Intereſt as to this World conſiſts, and by holding up to our View our moſt eſſential Intereſts in That which is to come, furniſhes Parents with the moſt powerful Motives to excite them to their Duty, and with the beſt Rules to guide them in this important Concern. Does it not follow, then, that there is the higheſt preſumptive Reaſon from hence to conclude, that Religion is not the Fruit of idle Superſtition, but of Truth? Annihilate Religion, for a Moment, in your Imagination, and ſuppoſe all Mankind to come to a Point upon the Queſtion, that there is no future State; what would be the Effect? The main Fences and Barriers of Society would be deſtroyed, and the ſtrongeſt if not the only Incitements to the painful Duties of well-educating our Children, would ceaſe to exiſt. Education would become a trifling Concern.

Yea,

Yea, worſe than this; the whole Buſineſs of it would be, what we ſee it too often is where Religion is held in Contempt, a Mode of Diſcipline to initiate Youth into all the ſecret Myſteries of Seduction, Fraud, and Deceit, and to qualify them for all the open Villanies of Injuſtice, Violence, and Cruelty. Nothing can bear an Aſpect more favourable to the Civil Intereſt of Society than Religion does: it may therefore very naturally be preſumed by him who has not entered into the poſitive Evidence of it, that its Origin is divine.

Theſe things premiſed, and under the Influence of, and conſtant Attention to, the grand Object of our Children's everlaſting Welfare, (which ſhould over-rule every other Conſideration whatever,) we ſhall now proceed to the indiſpenſible Duty of Parents to provide for the temporal Accommodation of their Children, as far as they are able; and the beſt Means in Order to it.

And here, — It cannot be very difficult to collect that there is a Duty incumbent upon the Parent to the Child; a Duty that is taught by Nature, (*) and enforced by the ſtrongeſt Terms in the Goſpel, to provide for him. This Duty begins the Moment the Child is born, and can never be diſpenſed with, ſo long as the Child liveth, provided he is not wanting in his Duty to his Parents.

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(*) See Page 199.

The Apoſtle tells us, that "he is worſe than an Infidel," that neglecteth this Duty. And the Reaſon of this is evident: it being a Duty which even the Heathens thought themſelves obliged to from the Laws of Nature; and therefore that Chriſtian that neglects it, is, in that Reſpect, worſe than a Heathen. Now,

By making Proviſion for your Children muſt be underſtood, ſuch a Proviſion as may enable them, by the Help of an honeſt Induſtry, to become good and uſeful Men in the World; for what can be a more lamentable Conſideration to Parents, than to reflect, that by their Idleneſs and Extravagance, they have expoſed their helpleſs Iſſue to Miſery and Contempt, and to all the Temptations of Poverty and Want?

If Parents cannot leave their Children a Sufficiency, to ſubſiſt on, they ſhould fix them to ſome Buſineſs or Employ, by which, through God's Bleſſing, they may procure a Livelihood. "Children are not to lay up for their Parents, but Parents for their Children." Not that they are obliged to provide endleſsly for their Children. To heap up ſo much Wealth, as may make it needleſs for Children to be either virtuous or induſtrious, in Order to get a comfortable Subſiſtence, is ſurely a dangerous Proviſion, and ſuch as never can be a Duty. And, certainly, much leſs are they obliged to provide ſuch Fortunes for them as may tempt them

to

to Luxury and Exceſs, to Vanity and Extravagance; becauſe that is providing, not for their Support, but for their Ruin, both of Body and Soul: No; but with their large Eſtates, they muſt provide them alſo with Abilities of Body and Mind, both to obtain, preſerve, and uſe the Benefits they intend to beſtow upon them; ſuch as will beſt qualify them for the Stations of Life they are to fill. And in doing this, their Capacities, Inclinations, and Views will be conſulted. (*)

Theſe things are neceſſary both to the Poor and the Rich; ſince without them the Rich will ſoon become poor, and the Poor will never become rich.

The Poor can never diſcharge the Duty of Parents well to their Children without inuring them to Labour and Hardſhip; this being the only Proviſion they are capable of making for them, is therefore their indiſpenſible Duty.

At firſt Sight, indeed, it looks like doing them no Harm to let them continue idle: but, this is a Miſtake not only hurtful to the Common-wealth, but of pernicious Conſequence alſo to the Children themſelves; for tho it may pleaſe for the preſent, yet it entails perpetual Miſery, and oftentimes untimely Death, by engaging them in wicked Courſes, the direct Road to Ruin. Whereas, the bringing them up to Labour, keeps them, at leaſt, in a due Sufficiency, if not in Plenty,

(*) See the Note, Vol. xviii. Page 312. Serm. 378. and

and puts them into a Capacity of going through many Difficulties, and bettering their Condition in Life, as Providence ſhall direct.

As to the Rich and better Sort of People, their Quality and Condition is alſo to be conſidered in determining what Kind of Proviſion is to be made for their Children.

Cuſtom and Uſage of Countries make many things decent and fit, which otherwiſe would be indifferent; and Diſtinction of Quality and Condition is abſolutely neceſſary to the maintaining of Harmony and Order in the World. It is impoſſible for Mankind to live in Peace without a due Subordination of one Condition to another. And therefore,

Tho theſe things, conſidered by themſelves, appear neither moral nor religious, but as Matters of Decency and Form; yet whoſever ſets himſelf to conſider things thoroughly, will find them, in Conjunction one with another, to be ſo eſſentially neceſſary to the Security of Peace and Order, that without them, neither Religion nor Morality could ſubſiſt, much leſs flouriſh on the Earth. Indeed,

It cannot be aſcertained in what Rank of Virtues, Decency, and Honour, and Diſtinction of Quality and Condition ſtand; but yet, it is eaſy to ſee, that without theſe things, there would be nothing but Confuſion

fuſion and Diſorder in the World. It is therefore poſſible for one Man to do That, by Reaſon of his Quality, with Reaſon and Innocence, which another cannot do, on Account of his Condition, without Offence and Blame.

It is utterly impoſſible, therefore, for any One to preſcribe to a Parent a Rule of Proviſion for his Children, either as to Kind or Quality: but it will not be difficult for him himſelf to do it, taking the following things into Conſideration,

Firſt, That he never educate his Children above the Proviſion he deſigns to make for them. And,

Secondly, According to THAT Proviſion he inure them to Labour, Diligence, and Induſtry, to Attention and Application, as they are able.

Theſe are common to all Qualities and Conditions; the pooreſt are not too mean for them, nor the richeſt above them. (*) And,

Firſt, A Parent ſhould never educate his Children above the Proviſion he deſigns to make for them: (‡) it being much more eaſy to bear with a mean Condition conſtantly, than to fall into it from a plentiful and good

(*) See No. 119, of the Spectator.

(‡) See Knox's Eſſays, No. 119, On the Folly of bringing up Children to a learned Profeſſion without the Probability of providing them with a Competency.

good one; which is the Caſe of People better educated than provided for. The ſoft and tender Uſage of People, whilſt young, and capable of undergoing Labour and Hardſhip, is truly a Diſkindneſs to them, without an anſwerable Proviſion for them afterwards; for, when left to themſelves, they are, as it were, expoſed naked and defenceleſs; being unable to provide for themſelves: and conſequently, are in a much worſe Condition than their Inferiors.

This is the Misfortune frequently, of being born of an ANCIENT and GENTEEL Family, or Parents preſumed to be much richer than they really are—as if the Quality of Fathers was a ſufficient Plea to entail Miſery upon their Succeſſors. (*) This, therefore, proceeds not from Kindneſs to Children, but generally from Pride and Vanity; making the Children mean and miſerable indeed, leſt the Parents themſelves ſhould be thought ſo. This is apparently preferring their own Fame to the true and laſting Benefit of their Children, in a material Point; which is a very ill Way of providing for them. (†)

The Effects of this unadviſed Way of Education are ſo remarkably bad and viſible, that, in Reaſon, Men ſhould need no Caution againſt it. The Sons either fall

(*) See No. 108, of the Spectator, with No. 114.

(†) *Bona Educatio præferenda eſt claris Natalibus.*

fall into the Meanneſs of Servitude, among the idle and uninſtructed Part of Mankind, or betake themſelves, in Deſpair, to the Wars abroad, or to Robberies at home: whilſt the Daughters fall often into the Hands of wicked Tempters, thro Want of Ability to employ themſelves in honeſt Courſes, and an utter Incapacity of maintaining their Condition; their Poverty rendering them unfit for their Equals, and their ſoft expenſive Education, with the Pride of Family-Spirit, making their Inferiors afraid to connect in Marriage with them.

Theſe are ſome of the uſual ill Effects of a Parents educating his Children much above the Proviſion he is able to make for them; ſufficient to diſcourage any One from doing it, conſidering how much eaſier it is to advance and riſe above our Hopes, than to fall below them; and how much kinder it is to leave our Children in Satisfaction and Content, if not Surprize and Pleaſure, than in Grief and Shame upon their Diſappointment.

There is an oppoſite Extreme, not to be forgotten [viz.] a mean and ſordid Education, when the Parents deſign to leave, or cannot help leaving, them a plentiful Fortune. (*) We

(*) *Ninis Pecuniarum Collectis ſub Pretextu lucrandi pro Liberis, luguium inhoneſtum et avarum arguit et detegit.*

Serm. CCCLXXVIII.

We do not directly charge this Humour, as a Sin; but it is certainly a very great Indiscretion; - It hath often had very ill Consequences, and cannot easily have good; for - young People, either seeing good Reason to hope, or finding for certain, that they shall one Day succeed to a Fortune superior to the Condition they are educated in, will either despise, or neglect their Business; and consequently, in the first Place, become bad Servants; and, as soon as they come to Liberty and their Estate, fall into every Extravagance, and make a very ill Use of Both.

A prudent Parent, therefore, will carefully avoid both these Extremes, and train up, and educate his Children according to the Station he is in, and the Provision he can make for them; by which Means the Children have Encouragement to prosecute their Calling with Industry and Application, as knowing their Parents will second their Endeavours, and help them according to their Beginnings.

The other thing, a Parent should not be unmindful of, is, that whatever Provision he intends to make for his Children, he do, by all Means, inure them to Diligence and Industry, to Application and Attention of Mind. (*) These Qualities may, per-chance, make some

(*) *Maximè Adolescentia est a Libidinibus tollenda, in Labore, et Patientiâ Animi et Corporis exercendo, ut in Bellicis et Civilibus Officiis eorum vigeat Industria. Caveant Intemperantiam, meminerint Verecundiæ.*

ſome Amends for the Defect of Wealth; but no Proviſion will ſupply the Defect of THEM. Many emerge, by theſe, out of great and exceeding Difficulties, and make their Way to Plenty and Proſperity; and many for Want of theſe, decline from Plenty to as great Miſery. — But,

As it is not either fit, or decent, or at leaſt, not cuſtomary for the Children of the Rich, to be placed out to ſettled Callings, they ſhould therefore be inured to the Labours of the Mind, and ſo fit themſelves for ſuch Services as may, in Time, be proper for them.

There is no One, but is born and obliged to ſerve his Country in ſome Capacity or other; here therefore, lies the great Duty of thoſe who have the Care of Youth, to place them in ſuch Circumſtances as beſt agree with their natural Temper and Talents — The Genius and Diſpoſition, and Capacity of every One is principally to be attended to, and then a Calling to be choſen which ſuits with both; and no worldly Conſiderations ought to divert us from this Proceeding.

It is this that will ſtand in the beſt Stead in all Conditions, it will help them to riſe from Meanneſs to a Sufficiency, to improve a good Eſtate to a better; to prevent a Fall, or to bear it well; and to recover what has been loſt. This

This is the Benefit of a good Education, and of being accuſtomed to Labour both of Body and Mind, whilſt young and pliable, and ſuſceptible of Impreſſions; – and which therefore, ſhould be eſpecially provided for, in the firſt Place: This is to be the Ground and Foundation, and upon this we may build whatever Good we will; for, it will bear it, and without it all the reſt will fail, and fall to nothing.

To forward and promote which, ſober and religious Maſters will be ſought for them, if they are intended for Trade and Commerce; and able and pious Inſtructors, if they are deſigned for other and more public Profeſſions. A ſtrict Regard will be had to their Morals. Every poſſible Method will be taken to ſecure them from the greateſt of all Evils, bad Company; and to aſſociate them with wiſe, virtuous, & good People. they will be treated, as they advance towards Maturity, with a Familiarity and Confidence ſuited to their Age. Such Appointments they will have as their Parents Circumſtance will admit of; and the Mode of that Support will be ſo adjuſted as, on the one Hand, to elude all Temptation to youthful Diſſipation; and on the other, to give that generous Pleaſure to their Hearts which may ſtimulate them to the cheerful Diſcharge of their Duty. But the grand Object of all will be to lead them, during this Period, upon right Principles into a ſerious and cordial Profeſſion of Religion. Sermon

SERMON CCCLXXIX.

On the same Subject.
Parents, to settle their Children.

Ephe. vi. 4. "Fathers, provoke not your Children "to Wrath; but bring them up in the Nurture "and Admonition of the Lord."

Having gradually advanced in our Considerations on this Subject, I shall now offer some Observations on the Duty of Parents respecting the Settlement of their Children in Life.

The Period to which we have conducted Children, and in which we are now to View them, is the most critical and important in all their Lives. They are just passing from Minority to Majority. Puerility yields to Judgment, and Fancy to Consideration; yet with the Understanding which Youth possess, there is usually, through Inexperience, a Mixture of Vanity and Conceit, which is however often balanced with great Frankness and Generosity of Temper. The Passions now acquire their full Strength. A thousand Objects address their Senses, and various pleasing and en-

enchanting Proſpects open to their View. And ſuch being their Character they are expoſed to many Dangers, and a falſe Step at this Period may be followed with the moſt fatal Conſequences. In ſhort, every thing, under God, depends upon the Turn they now take, and upon the Courſe they now purſue. This is the Time, therefore, of all others, in which Parents ſhould ſummon together their utmoſt Prudence, Good-nature, Reſolution, and Piety, in Order to the guiding them into that Path which they will probably purſue to the End of their Lives. Now, three things are particularly deſerving the Attention of Parents at this Seaſon, the conciliating to themſelves their Childrens cordial Affections, the aſſerting properly their Authority over them, and the endeavouring to moderate their own lucrative and their Childrens ambitious Views.

Ingenuous Children may be ſuppoſed, when thus riſing into Life, to feel a grateful Senſe of the Obligations they owe to their Parents for a thouſand Expreſſions of Tenderneſs and Love towards them during their Minority, which will ſcarce fail to ſecure to them the moſt kind and gentle Treatment in Return. But it ſometimes ſo happens that the jealous Eye which Parents keep on their own Authority, now their Children are juſt becoming their own Maſters; the painful Apprehenſions they feel for their Safety, now they are

juſt

just launching into the World; and perhaps some Degree of Asperity in their Temper; all unite to create such a Distance and Reserve in their Behaviour, as tends to diminish their Childrens Reverence and Affection. But this should be carefully guarded against. (*) It is an Evil that will be more poignantly felt now than formerly. We cannot take too much Pains, therefore, to convince them that we most tenderly love them, and that their Honour and Happiness both in this World and another lie very near our Hearts. Nor can we carry ourselves towards them with too much Familiarity, Indulgence, and Confidence, provided we do not suffer ourselves to sink into Contempt in their Eye. Thus, taking every possible Measure to render ourselves agreeable to them, they will feel themselves warmly attached to us, will never be so happy as when in our Company, and will not act without our Advice and Consent in any important Matter.

But, however the Mode of governing them may and ought to change with their Age, Parents should yet preserve their Authority over them; and that not for their

(*) ——— *Errat longè, mea quidem Sententiâ,*
Qui Imperium credat esse gravius aut stabilius
Vi quod fit, quàm illud quod amicitiâ adjungitur.
Terence.
Benignè invitando Patrem quid obtinere oportet.
Serm. CCCLXXIX.

their own Sakes only, but theirs alſo. If indeed this has not been aſſerted in their Minority, it will be a vain Attempt to aſſume it now. In ſuch Caſe Parents will not have Courage to claim their own Right, and Children will be too violent and head-ſtrong to yield it, and of Conſequence both will be the Sufferers, and in all Probability Sufferers to a very great Degree. To this Point, therefore, great Attention ſhould be paid. Nor will prudent Parents, who have well conducted the Buſineſs of Education hitherto, be at a loſs here. Providence having put the Means of Authority into their Hands, they will let their Children know that they poſſeſs them, and that they know how to apply them to the Purpoſes for which they are entruſted with them.

The other Matter we mentioned is alſo of great Conſequence, [viz] the uſing our utmoſt Endeavours, at this important Period particularly, to moderate our own and our Childrens Paſſion for the World. The Paſſions indeed of elder and younger People, in Regard of the World, expreſs themſelves differently: Wealth is too often the Object of the former, and Pleaſure and Honour of the latter. But if Parents will diſcharge their Duty properly to their Children at this Time, they muſt take Pains to bring their own Views as to the Acquiſition of Wealth within moderate Bounds, and to check the eager & ambitious De-

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ſires of their Children. The ſeeking great things has, in ſome Inſtances, proved the Occaſion of loſing every thing. It is unpardonable in Parents to tempt their Children with Proſpects, to which Providence hath not directed their Views; and it is a great Sin and Folly in Children not to liſten attentively to thoſe Leſſons of Moderation which their Parents teach them.

And now, deeply impreſſed with theſe Sentiments, there are three Objects which ſhould particularly engroſs the Attention of Parents reſpecting their Children, [viz] Company, Buſineſs, and Alliances in Marriage.

As to the firſt, the leading them into a ſtrict Intimacy with wiſe, virtuous, and good young People, and giving ſuch Perſons, at their Invitation, a hearty Welcome to our Houſes, will have a very great Effect. It will keep them out of the Way of Temptation, and contribute at once both to their Improvement and Happineſs. — As to Buſineſs, their particular Occupations or Profeſſions in Life have been already choſen, and the Matter now is to find out fit Situations for their carrying on the one, or their exerciſing the other. In the Choice of theſe, the Object ſhould be, not only their worldly Succeſs, but the ſecuring them from Snares of various Kinds, too numerous to be mentioned here. Our diligent Watch, Counſel, and Aſſiſtance they will daily need, and theſe, parental Anxiety and Affection

will not fail to afford. — And then, as to Alliances they may contract in Marriage, upon which one Circumſtance their future Proſpects of Happineſs and Uſefulneſs will chiefly depend, it will be our Duty to exert all our Prudence, Influence, and Abilities on their Behalf.

Many unhappy Marriages are laid to the Charge of Parents, and, we fear, with too much Truth. A diſcreet Parent thinks himſelf obliged to ſettle his Child advantageouſly; but that is the Point wherein they ſo often fail; for, by advantageouſly they generally underſtand, richly and honourably: whereas Riches and high Rank eaſily may, and often do, bring many Miſeries along with them. There ought to be a ſtrict Examination of the Heart, on ſuch Occaſions, whether they can appeal to the All-ſeeing Eye for the Integrity of their Intentions, and whether Avarice or Ambition may not be more the Motives of their Conduct, than a reaſonable Proſpect of Happineſs to their Iſſue: for if any Degree of theſe mix with their Intentions, it will taint them before God; and naturally tends to the mutual Miſery both of the Parent and of the Child.

Many things ought to be carefully conſidered, before ſuch an Union is completed. And as perfect Obedience is required of the Children, Parents ſhould be very cautious in their Commands; and impoſe nothing upon them (particularly in Relation to Marriage) but with

with a proper Regard to their true Intereſt and Happineſs: which is not to be attained in the conjugal State, without true Worth and Virtue in the Aſſociate: which are not always the Attendants of Wealth and Honour. And even where theſe Excellencies are attended with thoſe temporal Advantages, the Parent's Choice is to be urged with the utmoſt Tenderneſs and Indulgence; inaſmuch as there may be latent and well-grounded Diſlikes, which (too often) Children can neither conquer nor explain.

When this is done, then, whatever may happen from the Parent's Miſapprehenſion of things, they will have a clear Conſcience, and no Room to reproach themſelves; nor can they juſtly be reproached.

There are ſome Parents ſuch Tyrants, that all the World muſt condemn them. We do not ſpeak to them, as they are incorrigible, and their Number ſmall; but we addreſs ourſelves to thoſe who appear more reaſonable: but although they act with leſs Appearance of Violence, may be as guilty; and by Inſinuations and artful Addreſs prevail over fearful and modeſt Minds, and obtain a Conſent, where they have not Courage or Aſſurance enough to reſiſt or contend on ſuch an Occaſion. This has been the unhappy Caſe of many a young Perſon; and is, in Effect, as cruel a Caſe as can be well imagined; inaſmuch as it frequently

turns the humble and dutiful Diſpoſition of Children into their Deſtruction. — But on this Subject I forbear to enlarge here, as it hath been particularly diſcuſſed in a former Diſcourſe. (*) Therefore laſtly,

The laſt Duty that Parents owe their Children, is, to pray to God for them; foraſmuch as without the Aſſiſtance and Protection of the Divine Providence, all your Endeavours for the Well-being of your Children, will be ineffectual, and all your Counſels vain. You may inculcate the beſt Precepts with the utmoſt Care and Diligence, but you will never do it to Effect, without the Aſſiſtance of the Divine Grace: "Paul may plant, and Apollos water; but it is God who giveth the Increaſe." You may take as much Pains as you will to eſtabliſh your Family, but remember always, that "except the Lord buildeth the City or Houſe, their Labour is but loſt that build it." (‡) Therefore you are to pray earneſtly, humbly, and inceſſantly to Almighty God for them; beſeeching him that He would give them a convenient Portion of temporal good things, whereby they may be enabled to ſerve him with greater Cheerfulneſs, — that He would beſtow on them ſpiritual Bleſſings, — and, at laſt, to bring them to his eternal Glory: (i.e) that he would inſpire them with Charity and Mercy, with Truth and Juſtice, with Humility

(*) Page 1, &c. of this Vol. (‡) See the Note, Page 251.

mility and Meekneſs, with Honeſty, Induſtry, and Sincerity in all their Dealings: that "our Sons may grow up as the young Plants," ſtrong and beautiful, and fitted for the nobleſt Purpoſes in the Architect: and "that our Daughters may be as the poliſhed Corners of the Temple," at once both Ornaments and Supports to the Church of Chriſt, and uſeful Members of the Houſehold of God; that, after the Example of their bleſſed Lord and Redeemer, they may "grow up in Wiſdom," as in Years, "and in Favour with God and Man:" that they may go on from Strength to Strength, gradually fitted and prepared unto every good Work, as living Temples of the Holy Ghoſt; until, from being the preſent Pillars and Ornaments of the Earth, they become Inhabitants, hereafter, with the Bleſſed, in Heaven.

The Duty of Parents, in its ſeveral Particulars, being thus evinced, I ſhall now add a few Motives for the due Enforcement of it.

The ſerious Attention of Parents to the Education of their Children, is a Matter of the greateſt Importance. The preſent and future Happineſs of Individuals, the Welfare of Society in general, and the Progreſs of Virtue and Religion in the World, do all, under God, very much depend upon it. This has ever been the Opinion of wiſe and conſiderate Men, and is the

plain Dictate of the Bible. — These therefore are the Motives by which I shall enforce the grand Duty before us.

There is, indeed, something very humiliating in the Idea of Parents being perſuaded to take care of their Children, and to excite Men to that which it ſhould be impoſſible for almoſt any Force to reſtrain them from doing. Yet, it is neceſſary. The ſhameful Neglects, in Regard of the Education of Children, too viſible in this Country, and among ſome who claim the Character of virtuous and religious People, juſtify the Aſſertion. It is a National Evil. The baneful Effects of it are already felt, and will be in a ſtill greater Degree, if a Reformation does not ſpeedily take place. Every Exertion, therefore, is needful on our Parts to rouſe Men from their Slumber, and to excite them to a Duty, which the Welfare of their Children, — the Intereſts of Civil Society, — and the Progreſs of Religion in the World, demand at their Hands. — And,

II. The Welfare of our Children calls loudly upon us to take all the Care we can of their Education.

This is an Argument addreſſed to natural Affection, under the Guidance of Reaſon and Religion: and Parents of this Deſcription cannot avoid feeling the Force of it. If a Man is deſtitute of all Affection to his Offſpring, he is devoid of natural Inſtinct; and though in

a

a human Shape, he is to be beheld with Abhorrence. If he hath Affection for his Children, but the Expreſſions of that Affection are WHOLLY confined to their animal Nature, what is he more than the inferior Creatures? If his Affection extends further than merely to their animal Nature, and his Object is their Advancement in civil Society, he may be ſtyled a Man of Senſe: but their moſt important Intereſts having no Share in his Concern, he cannot be deemed a Man of Religion. Now it is with Parents, as Men of Humanity, good Senſe, and Piety, we are here reaſoning. To your View, in each of theſe Lights, we would hold up the great Object of your Children's Welfare.

To your Humanity, in the firſt Place, we would commend the Care of your Children's Perſons, we mean their animal Nature. Here we have no Occaſion to perſuade. Natural Affection is Inſtinct. It operates without Reaſoning. Its Force is irreſiſtible. (*) Your Children are Parts of Yourſelves; you feel they are. Your Image is in their Countenances. To you, helpleſs, they look up for Support. To your Arms, defenceleſs, they fly for Protection. To you they run as to their Guardians and Friends. You cannot ſuppreſs Emotions of Tenderneſs and Love towards them. You cannot caſt-off Bowels of Compaſſion for them. No; Humanity forbids it. The

(*) See Page 199.

The Idea of their ſuffering Want, Poverty, and Wretchedneſs, makes you miſerable, harrows up your very Soul. Every Nerve you would exert to procure them Subſiſtence, and leave no Effort untried to reſcue them from Deſtruction.

But to you alſo they look up, or we for them, as to Men of Underſtanding and Prudence; to make what Proviſion you can for their eſcaping temporal Miſery, when they grow up into Life, and their obtaining a Degree at leaſt of temporal Happineſs. You have Knowledge of the World. You have Experience. You know before-hand the Dangers of various Kinds to which they will be expoſed, and the Exertions that are neceſſary in various Ways in Order to procure a Competency of Wealth, Honour, and Felicity. You dread the Thought of their ſinking into Poverty, and being treated with Contempt. And though it is not your Object to raiſe them to the Summit of worldly Splendour and Glory, as this is the Lot but of few; yet you would gladly introduce them into Situations that may render them eaſy, reſpectable, and uſeful. But how is this to be done? He who has poſſeſſed you of parental Affection, has alſo endowed you with Reaſon to direct to the proper Means for the gratifying that Affection. And what are thoſe Means, but the giving them a prudent and virtuous Education. A good E-

ducation

ducation is better than an ample Fortune. (*) How can you expect that they ſhould be ſucceſsful in Life, if not prepared for the Stations they are to fill by ſuitable Inſtruction? And, tho' ſucceſsful, how can you expect that they ſhould be happy and uſeful, if Principles of Integrity, Induſtry, Sobriety, Moderation and Benevolence, are not inſtilled into them? To neglect their Education, therefore, or to ſuffer them to grow up rude and undiſciplined, without laying a proper Reſtraint upon their Paſſions, is to offer Violence to natural Affection, or at leaſt to fix an indelible Blot upon your Character in Point of Prudence and good Senſe.

But the Object which moſt of all demands your Attention, is, the Salvation of their immortal Souls. You believe there is a God, that there is a Difference between Good and Evil, that Men cannot be happy in this Life if they do not approve the former and ſhun the latter, that Religion is the nobleſt Source of real Pleaſure, that though your Children were poſſeſſed of all that this World can afford, without an Intereſt in the Favour of God they would be miſerable, that they muſt die, that they are amenable at the divine Tribunal, that their Souls are immortal, and that, unleſs they believe

(*) See the Note, Vol. xviii. Page 306—ditto, 340.

believe in Chriſt, and are his genuine Diſciples, they are undone for ever. You believe theſe great Truths, or however you profeſs to believe them. How can you then love your Children, and, having the leaſt Share of common Senſe, not feel yourſelves impelled by an irreſiſtible Kind of Neceſſity to hold up to their View theſe Truths, with all the Evidence that accompanies them; and to preſs upon them their Importance, with Earneſtneſs and Zeal? — If you do not believe them, that indeed will account for your Neglect. But if you do, and yet neglect to inculcate them, yours is the moſt abſurd Character in the World. Give your Children a religious Education, or ſay in ſo many Words that you have no Religion yourſelves, and that you hold it all in Contempt. Do Juſtice to your own Principles and to them, or be content to be called, what you really are, either Infidels or Fools. How can you have natural Affection with parental Tenderneſs, and yet be reconciled to the agonizing Sight of viewing them plunged in the Depths of Vice and Sin, going down to Death and the Grave under the Weight of accumulated Guilt, and ſuffering the Wrath of God in all its tremendous Forms in the World to come?

The Welfare of their Children, then, is the firſt and main Argument we would urge on Parents to perſuade them to look well after their Education. — But, beſides

ſides this Intereſt for our Children, our Attention ſhould be extended,

adly, To the Intereſts of Civil Society.

Providence hath ſo diſpoſed things in the preſent Life, as that Men ſhould mutually depend upon each other for their Support, Protection, and Happineſs. They are poſſeſſed therefore of Paſſions which irreſiſtibly impel them to ſocial Connections. But Society cannot ſubſiſt, to the important and ſalutary Purpoſes of its Appointment, without good Government. And Government cannot have its due Effect, unleſs Men are in general perſuaded of the Fitneſs & Propriety of Submiſſion to it. For tho the Laws are juſt and good, and thoſe who govern, are entruſted with the neceſſary Powers for carrying them into Execution; yet, if Profligacy and Want of Principle univerſally prevail, the Wheels of Government will be clogged, and in a Courſe of Time every thing will fall back into its original State of Anarchy and Confuſion. Now Education is the natural and moſt effectual Mean to prevent thoſe Evils, which are ſo inimical to good Government, and of Conſequence to the Intereſt of Society.

Senſible of this, all wiſe Lawgivers have taken care, in the founding Civil States, to give every poſſible Encouragement to the Education of Children. Penal Laws have not indeed been deemed neceſſary to impel

Parents to their Duty, as they have every imaginable Inducement to it. But then parental Authority has received the fulleſt Support from Government, and the Diſobedience of Children has been judged a Crime deſerving of Public Reprehenſion and Puniſhment. (*) Countenance has been given, in various Ways, to the Intereſts of Learning, and liberal Foundations have been eſtabliſhed for the inſtructing Children and Youth: and thus the State, and all the other Departments of Civil Society, have been ſupplied with a Succeſſion of able, uſeful and worthy Perſons. Whoever conſults the Laws of Moſes will find particular Regard was paid by him to this Matter. The Spartans, a People famous for their national Virtue and Intrepidity, laid the greateſt Streſs upon Education. To this the Proſperity and Grandeur of the ancient Romans were chiefly to be attributed. And moſt Kingdoms in Proportion to the Attention paid to this Object, have flouriſhed or declined. — Now,

What good Man is there who does not wiſh to ſee his Country proſper, Trade and Commerce flouriſh, the Arts and Sciences held in Reputation, Health and Plenty abound, and Peace, Harmony and Good-will prevail among all Ranks of Men? Theſe are very deſireable Bleſſings: every Individual, as well as the Community in general, is affected by them. but how can

(*) See Deut. xxi. 15—21.

can theſe Bleſſings be expected if no Pains are taken to form the Morals of Youth, to inſtil the Principles of Virtue into their Minds, and to fit them for the Part they are to act in Society. (*)

If then we have any Concern for the Welfare of Poſterity, any Deſire that our Country may exiſt to a late Period of Time, any Paſſion for its future Reputation and Honour, any Anxiety about the preſent State of Affairs, any Wiſh that we may emerge out of the Calamities in which we are involved, reſume our former Luſtre, and enjoy again the great national Bleſſings of Peace, Unanimity, and Proſperity; let us acquit ourſelves as good Members of the Community, and be perſuaded, from the Love we owe to our Country, as well as to our Children, to give them every Advantage of a virtuous Education within our Power. — But there is one Motive further to be urged, and that is,

3dly, The Concern we feel, as Chriſtians, for the Progreſs of Religion in the World.

We here addreſs thoſe who know what Religion is, who

(*) *Gratum eſt, quod Patriæ Civem, Populoque dediſti,*
Si facis, ut Patriæ ſit idoneus, utilis Agris,
Utilis et Bellorum, et Pacis Rebus agendis.
Plurimum enim intereſt, quibus Artibus, et quibus hunc tu
Moribus inſtituas. ——— ——— Juv.
Serm. CCCLXXIX.

who firmly believe its sacred Truths, have felt their Power, and tasted their Sweetness. You agree with Solomon in giving it the Character of Wisdom, and account those happy who find it. (*) Persuaded that she is capable of making Men wise unto Salvation, of giving a new Bias to their depraved Inclinations, of regulating their disordered Passions, of soothing their afflicted Breasts, and animating them to the most generous Actions, you would gladly introduce her to the Acquaintance of all around you. Assured that her Presence, Energy, and Influence, will turn a barren Wilderness into a fruitful Garden, restore Beauty, Order, and Happiness to Society, and reflect a new Lustre and Glory upon the whole Face of Nature, it is your Wish, it is your Endeavour, to promote her Interests to the utmost of your Power among Mankind. — Now,

The training up Children in the Way they should go, "bringing them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord," is one Mean among many others to spread the Empire of Religion in the World. No doubt God has Ways of accomplishing his wise and benevolent Purpose, without the Intervention of human Means. But this militates not against our Duty. What God has commanded ought to be done. And who will say that there is not a Fitness in the Means to the End?

(*) Prov. iii. 13—17.

Hath

Hath not the explaining to Children the real Difference between Good and Evil, the representing to them plain Truths, and expounding to them the Principles of Religion, accompanied with seasonable Restraints and Encouragements, a direct Tendency, with the Blessing of God, to generate Sentiments of Virtue and Piety in their Minds? (*)

Doubtless, there are many Instances of those who, thro the extraordinary Interposition of Divine Grace, have surmounted the Evils resulting from the Want of this inestimable Blessing. The tender Bowels of their heavenly Father have more than compensated for the Brutality of their natural Parents. And it should

(*) All the wise Men in the World agree, that the first Impressions made upon us, in our tender Years, sink the deepest, and last the longest. And therefore Solomon well directeth, that Children should be carefully taught, as soon as they are capable of Instruction, all those Principles and Duties which we would desire to have them practise throughout the whole Course of their Lives. If good Precepts and Principles are early impressed and fixed, they will be so many Lights set up in the Minds of Children, to direct their Conduct through the Maze of Life; to guide them in the Ways of Virtue and Truth, and in the Paths that lead to everlasting Happiness. And although the Giddiness of Youth, and the blind Impulse of unruly Passions, should sometimes divert them out of their Course; yet as soon as the Tumult and Infatuation is over, and the Mind calmed to the Dictates of Reason, they will again return into "the Way they should go; and when they are old, they will not depart from it."

ſhould alſo be further obſerved, that the beſt Education Parents can poſſibly give their Children, ſometimes fails of the deſired End, and is indeed never ſucceſsful without the Concurrence of a ſuperior Influence.

It is the Voice, however, of Reaſon and Scripture, that the Means God hath appointed, be uſed; and have they not, in innumerable Inſtances, produced this Effect? We have the expreſs Promiſe of God in the Caſe: (*) And conſequently, under ſuch Inſtruction, ſuch Children, inheriting the Piety of their Anceſtors, have become themſelves, and their Deſcendants after them, the honoured Inſtruments of propagating Religion in the World.

Add to theſe things, the Approbation and Command of God in this Caſe. The Conduct of Abraham was, on this Account, highly acceptable; "I know him (ſaith the Lord) that he will command his Children after him," (i.e) that he will diligently inſtruct them, and ſolemnly enjoin it upon them, "to keep the Way of the Lord, and to do Juſtice and Judgment."

Moſes again and again enforces it with great Earneſtneſs. (‡) Great Judgments are denounced on the Houſe of Eli for the Impieties of his Children, and for his not having exerted his parental Authority over them, as the

(*) In Iſaiah, lv. 10, 11.

(‡) Deut. vi. 6, 7.—xi. 18, 19.—xxi. 18—21.

the Law of Nature and of God had required. "I will judge his House for ever, says the Lord, for the Iniquity which he knoweth: because his Sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not."

David instructed Solomon in his Duty, and with great Affection besought him "to keep the Way of the Lord his God, and to take heed to fulfil the Statutes and Judgments which the Lord had commanded." The several Passages which occur in the Book of Proverbs respecting the Education of Children might here be mentioned. And to come down to the New Testament, the Duty of Parents is implied in the Admonitions there given Children to obey and honour them, and it is more strongly expressed in the Exhortations to Parents themselves in the Text, "to bring up their Children in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord;" and "to rule their own Houses well, having their Children in Subjection with all Gravity."

There is one more Consideration to enforce the Idea of the divine Authority in this Matter, which must not be omitted, and that is the tender Compassion which the blessed God has every where in Scripture expressed for young Children. Passages of this Sort are too numerous to be cited. But doubtless, the Language of them all is much the same, as hath often been observed, with that of Pharaoh's Daughter to the

Mother of Moſes, "Take this Child, and nurſe it for me." (i.e) Let there be the like Tenderneſs in your Breaſts towards your Offspring that there is in mine towards them and you. Do your Duty, and you ſhall not fail to have your Reward. And ſuch, ſurely, was the Sentiment our Saviour meant to convey, when he "took up little Children in his Arms, put his Hands on them, and bleſſed them." And I muſt add, that the Condeſcenſion of the great God, in ſtyling himſelf our Father, and the Meaſures which, as ſuch, he takes to prepare us for the Inheritance we are to enjoy in Heaven, when arrived at Man's Eſtate; furniſh at once the moſt powerful Argument to excite us to our Duty, and the plaineſt Directions to guide us therein.

And now, can we find it in our Hearts to reſiſt the united Force of all theſe Motives, pouring in upon us from every Quarter, and addreſſing themſelves to every Paſſion of the human Breaſt? Can we annihilate all Concern for the Intereſts of our Children, the Welfare of our Country, the Glory of God, and our own Comfort and Honour here and hereafter? It is impoſſible.

Gratify, therefore, that unconquerable Paſſion you feel for the Happineſs of your Children. Realize the Benefits which, through the divine Favour, will reſult to them from your prudent Care and tender

Love

Love in this World and another: And follow your unwearied Endeavours for their Welfare, with ardent Prayers to God for the desired Success. Look well to their Morals. Keep them out of the Way of Vice and Sin: and do your utmost, in a Dependence upon the divine Grace, to conciliate their Regards to Religion, that best and noblest of all Blessings: — so will Blessings be exceedingly multiplied upon you, by the Father of Mercies. Your dying Pillows will be made easy by the tendereſt Offices of filial Affection; and you will each have the transporting Pleasure, on the great Day of Account, of thus addressing your Judge, — "Behold here I am, and the Children thou hast given me." (*)

(*) See the Discourse on Education, in Vol. xviii. Page 198.

Sermon

SERMON CCCLXXX.

Duties of Children to their Parents.

Ephe. vi. 1, 2, 3. "Children, obey your Parents in "the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy Father "and Mother, (which is the firſt Commandment "with Promiſe) that it may be well with thee, and "thou mayeſt live long on the Earth."

The artleſs Simplicity and commanding Authority with which the moral Precepts of the Bible are enjoined upon us, muſt (we think) ſtrike the Mind of every attentive Reader with Pleaſure. Nothing could be more natural than for the Apoſtle, after he had held up to our View the exceeding Riches of the Grace of God in Chriſt, to perſuade us to the Duties of Benevolence. A Goſpel that originates in ſupreme Love, cannot ſurely be believed, felt, and enjoyed, without impelling Men to every Office of Kindneſs which the Light of Nature teaches and enjoins. Upon theſe Grounds, after he had recommended the more general and publick Duties of ſocial Life, he

he deſcends particularly to thoſe of the Relative and Social Kind, to Huſbands and Wives. — And,

As Families ariſe out of the conjugal Relation, which give Exiſtence to another Species of Duties eſſentially important to the Welfare of Society, theſe Duties too he explains and enforces. Parents he exhorts to bring up their Children in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord; and Children, in the Text, to behave themſelves with all becoming Reverence and Duty towards their Parents.

"Children, obey your Parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy Father and Mother, (which is the firſt Commandment with Promiſe) that it may be well with thee, and thou mayeſt live long on the Earth."

Among all the Engagements and Obligations, abſolutely neceſſary to the Order and Well-being of Society, the Duty of Children to Parents hath juſtly obtained the FIRST Place; becauſe all our other Duties to Mankind begin and are founded here. It is from a right Deference to the Authority and Inſtitutions of Parents that we learn to become good Men. It is here we ordinarily learn all the Offices of a ſocial and rational Creature, in our whole Commerce with Mankind; and therefore it is, that God in his great Wiſdom, when he had preſcribed the Duties relating to

himſelf, in the Decalogue, immediately ſubjoins that which reſpects our Parents, "Honour thy Father and Mother, &c.

In Alluſion to which the Apoſtle here enjoins the ſame Duty, "Children obey your Parents in the Lord; for This is Right: Honour thy Father and Mother, which is the Firſt Commandment with Promiſe." — In which Expreſſion, there is an Alluſion to the Order or Placing of the Commandments in the Law of Moſes; This being the Firſt in the Second Table, the Firſt of thoſe Commandments which declare our Duty towards Men; the Firſt to which is annexed expreſsly a particular Reward; "the Firſt Commandment with Promiſe." The natural Obſervation ariſing from which Particular, is, the Reaſonableneſs and Goodneſs of the GREAT Commandments of God both in the Law and the Goſpel. God begins where Nature itſelf does; making the ſame things to be the prime Foundations of his Law, which in the Nature of things themſelves, without any Law, were moſt reaſonable to be practiſed. The Goſpel carries indeed This and all other Moral Precepts to a much higher Degree of Improvement, requiring us to extend our Love towards ALL Men, and our Deſire of doing good even unto Enemies themſelves. But the prior Obligation, is That of Gratitude to Benefactors; and of making juſt Returns to

thoſe,

those, from whom we have received the Benefits of Life. Parents are, next to God, the Authors of our Being. God indeed is properly our Father, and earthly Parents do but convey to us that Being which God produces: but the Consequence from this is, that although we owe more absolute and unlimited Obedience to God, the Fountain of our Existence, yet we are to honour our Parents, as his Substitutes upon Earth.

But forasmuch as this Duty is not founded barely upon our Existence, but is deduced with more Force and greater Evidence, from the Advantages of early Support, and early Institution, derived to us by the Care and Affection of our Parents; therefore all those that are to us in the Place of Parents, and in that Relation eminently contribute to our Well-being, have the fullest and clearest Claim to paternal Honour. And such are, among others, "our Teachers and Spiritual Pastors." From your Parents you derive your Being; from these, your Well-being. From God you derive your immortal Soul, with all its excellent Faculties; from these you derive, under God, all that Cultivation and Improvement in Virtue and Knowledge, which are the Glory even of immortal Spirits.

In the next Place, your Rulers and Governors are to you in the Place of Parents, because they are the Fathers of their Country; and the Well-being of the

Community hath the ſame Dependance upon their paternal Care and Vigilance, that particular Houſes have upon the Prudence and Affection of the Maſters of Families. And indeed all Government, as it is originally derived from paternal Authority, is, in Truth, no otherwiſe to be conſidered than as an Enlargement of that Authority; ſo that Magiſtrates ſucceeding into the Place and Office of Parents, are to be regarded as public Fathers, on whom the Power of Life and Death, (originally veſted in Parents, *) is now devolved.

Having thus ſhewn who they are to whom we are to pay Honour and Obedience, from the Obligation of this Precept, I proceed,

Secondly, To explain the Particulars of what this Duty conſiſts, whether of Love, Reſpect, or Obedience, with all poſſible Succour and Support, if the ill State of their Affairs requires it.

To love our Parents is ſo natural, ſo reaſonable, fit and expected, that few have the Confidence to own the Want of it, even when they grieve, and know perhaps, they have it not: and, The Want of this Affection being oftentimes the Occaſion of our denying them that Reſpect, and Obedience, and Support, which we certainly owe, and ought, unqueſtionably, to pay them, it is to be improved by all the Conſiderations we can raiſe,

(*) See the Note, Page 208.

How

How far the Conſideration of their being, under God, the Authors and Originals of our Life and Being, will contribute to the exciting this Affection, is not eaſy to determine. The Ancients thought greatly of it, and therefore inſiſted much upon it.

But, be this as it may, the ſingular and inexpreſſible Affection of Parents to their Children deſerves to be repaid with all the Love they can; becauſe the parental Love is hourly diſplaying and exerting itſelf, in all the beneficial Acts of Kindneſs it can deviſe. It ſupplies all the Wants of helpleſs Infancy, ſecures from all the Hazards of heedleſs Childhood, and giddy unthinking Youth, and uſually with ſo chearful a Diligence, and ſo ſelf-denying a Tenderneſs, that no Return of Affection, on the Child's Part, can poſſibly repay it to the full — tho their Affection is what, above all things, makes Parents happy. (*) — Then,

As

(*) It has been often remarked that the *Social* Affections are found to be ſtronger in their *Deſcent*, than their *Aſcent*; that the Love implanted in the Breaſt of the Parent towards the Offspring is much more intenſe than that implanted in the Child towards its Parent. And herein the Providence of God is immediately viſible, and the Reaſon ſufficiently obvious; The Child, we know, is helpleſs and deſtitute, and without that Care and Tenderneſs muſt inevitably periſh; Whereas the Parent may ſubſiſt (though not with an equal Share of Comfort and Satisfaction) without the Return of filial Duty. See the middle Part of No. 110, of the Spectator.

Serm. CCCLXXX.

As Life goes on, it is their Parents that give or procure for them ſuch Inſtruction of all Kinds, as qualifies them both to do well in this World, and to be forever bleſſed in another, that watch over them continually with never-ceaſing Attention, conſulting their Inclinations in numberleſs obliging Inſtances, and bearing with their Perverſeneſs in as innumerable provoking Ones; kindly reſtraining them from a thouſand pernicious Follies, into which they would otherwiſe fall, directing their heedleſs Steps into the right Way; encouraging, rewarding, and, (which is no leſs a Benefit) correcting them alſo, as the Caſe requires; full of Solicitude all the while for their Happineſs, and conſuming themſelves with Labour and Thoughtfulneſs for them, to improve, ſupport and advance them in their Lives, and provide for them after their Deaths. Even thoſe Parents who perform theſe Duties but imperfectly, do enough to be loved ſincerely, as long as they live.

So that if Benefits can be the Foundation of Love in Children, they muſt love their Parents, who beſtow ſo many upon them. But, ſhould they fail in their Endeavour herein, as after all they may; yet, if there be no Want of Love, the Obligation is the ſame on the

But this, as well as every other, Reaſon, would be a poor Plea for the Omiſſion, or rather perhaps to every grateful and ingenuous Mind, would be a ſtronger Inducement to the Performance of it.

the Child. "Honour thy Father, therefore, with thy whole Heart, and forget not the Sorrows of thy Mother; remember thou waſt begat of them, and how canſt thou recompenſe them the things which they have done for thee?" — But,

2dly, A ſecond Duty, Children owe their Parents, is Reſpect, (i.e) all external Honour and Civility: which is only an awful Love, mixed with a Fear of offending, which ariſes from Reſpect and Duty; not ſuch a ſlaviſh Dread as drives us from the Preſence of thoſe in Authority over us, but ſuch a filial and affectionate Awe as fills us with Veneration and Eſteem, and will engage us to attend to the Monitions, and conform to the Conduct, of our Parents; and, at the ſame Time, to abſtain religiouſly from every thing that might give them the leaſt Trouble or Diſquiet: for Parents are not only Benefactors to, but in Rank the Betters, and in Right the Governours of their Children, whoſe Dependance is upon them, in Point of Intereſt generally, in Point of Duty always. They ought therefore to think of them with great Reverence, and treat them with every Mark of Submiſſion, in Geſture, in Speech, and in the whole of their Behaviour; which the Practice of wiſe and good Perſons hath eſtabliſhed as proper

Inſtances of filial Regard. (*) — "Honour thy Father and Mother;" (i.e) cheriſh in your Breaſts the moſt affectionate Eſteem for their Perſons and Characters; behave yourſelves towards them in the moſt reſpectful and dutiful Manner; and ſpeak of them with all poſſible Honour and Reverence. (‡) The Familiarities indeed of early Life, and of Hours of Recreation and Pleaſantry, are very properly to be allowed.

But if Parents, thro Fondneſs or Want of Judgment, take-off the Reſtraint, and remove the Barrs that keep their Children at a due Diſtance, they too often have Reaſon to repent of it: and if there ſhould be no Miſcarriage on it, yet, it is not owing to their Diſcretion, but to the Grace of God working early in the Children's Hearts. "Bring

(*) *Qui dubitat utrùm oporteat Deum venerari, aut Parentes honorare, non indiget Ratione, ſed Pœnâ.* — The higheſt Deference, Reſpect, and Submiſſion ſhould be ſhewn to Parents; becauſe they are, next to God, the moſt proper Objects of them. — *Venerari Parentes Liberos decet.*

(‡) It is but reaſonable we ſhould give Parents the moſt obliging Language, who firſt taught us to ſpeak; and therefore the rude Returns of wicked Children to their Parents are ſo deteſtible in the Sight of God, that He hath in his Law denounced a Puniſhment againſt it, equal to that of Blaſphemy againſt himſelf. "He that curſeth his Father or his Mother, ſhall ſurely be put to Death." And, "He that curſeth his Father or his Mother, his Lamp ſhall be put out in Obſcurity." All ſour, moroſe, and unſeemly Looks towards a Parent, are alſo threatened to be ſeverely puniſhed: "The Eye that mocketh at his Father, and deſpiſeth to obey his Mother, the Ravens of the Valley ſhall pick it out, and the young Eagles ſhall eat it."

"Bring up thy Son with Indulgence (ſaith the Wiſe Man) and he ſhall make thee afraid; – play with him, and he ſhall bring thee to Heavineſs. Bow down his Neck whilſt he is young, leſt he be diſobedient unto thee, and ſo bring Sorrow on thy Heart." (*)

Few young Perſons know how to uſe their Liberty before their Time – when parental Awe is taken off, by this Means, Counſels make but faint Impreſſions, and Commands are conſtantly diſputed. (‡) Whilſt

(*) *Deteriores omnes ſumus Licentiâ.—Nocet Indulgentia Matrum.*

(‡) What is here ſaid reſpecting keeping Children at a Diſtance, is to be underſtood *cum Grano Salis*, with Caution and Diſcretion; it does moſt commonly and naturally preſerve Reſpect and Honour; and therefore, it is beſt generally to be obſerved: But the different Circumſtances of Parents, and the different Tempers and Diſpoſitions of Children may make great Alteration; and are, therefore, to come into Conſideration. Some Children and young People are of ſo modeſt a Temper, and ſo diſcreetly educated and behaved, that all the Liberty you give them, does them no Harm; they ſtill preſerve a lively Senſe of Reſpect, and never go beyond their Bounds, but demean themſelves decently in the midſt of Favour and Indulgences. — Theſe would be hurt by great Reſtraint and Awe, and the Parent would loſe a great Deal of Comfort and innocent Delight by keeping ſuch at too much Diſtance. Others grow wanton, inſolent and headſtrong upon the leaſt Indulgence, and know not how to behave themſelves under Liberty and Kindneſs, falling from their Reſpect immediately, neither knowing themſelves nor others. This is the general Tendency, and Humour of moſt – to whom, therefore, Awe and Reſtraint is baſe, and without which they would be miſerable.

Whilſt on the other hand, a haughty diſtant, moroſe Carriage on the Part of Parents, tends to break the Spirits of Children, and to beget a Diſguſt in their Breaſts, which, however it may aſſume the Appearance of Reverence, will in the End weaken, if not totally deſtroy the Springs of ingenuous and affectionate Reſpect. Yet a too great Freedom in Diſcourſe and Behaviour ſhould be checked, not only as it is a Breach of good Manners, but as it will be apt in a Courſe of Time to degenerate into a Contempt of parental Authority.

But further, Reverence to Parents not only conſiſts in having a reſpectful Love for, and an awful Fear to offend them, as will create Eſteem and Veneration, and engage us to obſerve their Commands, and refrain from whatever is diſpleaſing to them; but likewiſe in expreſſing itſelf, as in Modeſty of Speech, ſo likewiſe in Lowlineſs and Submiſſion of Geſture. (*) But

(*) A meek, ſubmiſſive, reſpectful Demeanour in Children towards their Parents, is lovely in the Eyes of all, and is ever deemed by prudent People an Argument of good Senſe, as well as filial Piety. The Behaviour of Joſeph to his Father Jacob, and of Solomon to his Mother Bathſheba fails not to give Pleaſure to every Reader. The former, tho highly exalted as he was in the Court of the greateſt Monarch upon Earth, and next in Authority to Pharaoh, yet thought it no Leſſening to bend before his aged Father, and paying him all the Marks of Submiſſion and Duty; nay, and at a Time too when, as the Text aſſures us, "Jacob's Eyes were dim," and he could not ſee; and conſequently, when he could not be upbraided

by

But such a Deportment in Children will not be natural by his Father for Want of due Reſpect, and probably would not have been blamed by any other Mortal: for who would have been ſo vain as to cenſure the Conduct of One who was at that Moment in the higheſt Repotation for Wiſdom and Prudence of all Men then living; or, if their Vanity could have carried them to cenſure his Conduct, their Fear of Pharaoh's firſt Miniſter would certainly have obliged them to keep their Thoughts to themſelves. Yet, under all theſe Circumſtances of his Father's Blindneſs, his own exalted Station, unrivalled Wiſdom, and uncontroled Power, Joſeph's affectionate and dutiful Heart would not ſuffer him to diſpenſe with the leaſt Form of Reſpect and Veneration to his aged Parent; for we read, that when he brought his Sons from between his Knees, to preſent them to his Father, "he bowed himſelf with his Face to the Earth." And ſurely there is not any one Circumſtance of his Grandeur that reflects ſo much Luſtre upon his Character as this ſingle Inſtance of filial Humiliation. For, when we conſider him upon his Knees to God, we regard him as a frail Mortal, in the Diſcharge of Duty to his Creator, of adorable Majeſty and infinite Height above him. When we behold him bowing down to Pharaoh, we conſider him in the dutiful Poſture of a Subject to his Prince, to whom he was indebted for the higheſt Exaltation and Honour. But when we ſee him bending to the Earth, before a poor, aged, blind, decrepit Father, we behold him with Admiration and Delight: how doth that Humiliation exalt him! A Father, to whom he was ſo far from being indebted for a great Fortune, or an honourable Support, that, on the contrary, his Father was obliged to him, as far as a Father could be, upon both theſe Accounts. He had no Eſtate to ſettle, at leaſt none worth Joſeph's Regard; nor had his Son any Inheritance to hope for from him, but his Bleſſing; and that he thought he ought not to receive but in the loweſt Poſture of Humiliation and Reverence. A Demeanour, very diſtant

tural and eaſy, unleſs they cheriſh in their Breaſts a Partiality in Favour of their Parents Character for good Senſe, Integrity, and Piety. Where theſe Qualities do really reſide, they demand a greater Degree of Reſpect from Children, in whoſe Eyes they may be ſuppoſed to magnify, than from others. Where they really are not, natural Affection ſhould at leaſt create a Doubt on the Matter, if not wholly veil the contrary Imperfections from their View. And where they are found in a Degree only, it is the tender Office of filial Imagination to heighten and exaggerate them. Credulity here is an Argument of good Senſe, and Partiality a Virtue rather than a Vice. What Son, unleſs he

from the Principles and Practice of the preſent Age, who have no Notion that any thing can be meant by a Parent's Bleſſing, but ſome Mark of their Bounty, or Settlement of their Fortune; and for this Reaſon the beſt of Parents are regarded as little better than an Incumbrance upon the Son's Eſtate, and a Bar to his Happineſs: —And the latter, though a mighty Prince, riſing up from his Throne to meet his Mother, bowing himſelf to her, and cauſing a ſeat to be ſet for her at his Right-hand." This he did to a Widow Mother, himſelf a King, the wiſeſt of all Mankind, and then the mightieſt Monarch of the whole World. He knew the Duties of Life roſe with its Grandeur, and gave new Luſtre to it: his enlarged and generous Soul could not bear to have his Piety leſs exalted than his Power. And it is well known that there are, at this Day, Princes in the World, whoſe Veneration for their Parents will not ſuffer them to much as to ſit down in their Preſence. The ancient Laws of the Romans carried the Matter ſo far, as to oblige Children to apſe their Parents Gods.

he is a Brute, can willingly admit the Idea of his Parents that they are Fools, or that they are void of all Principle and Piety? On the contrary, what ingenuous dutiful Child is there, but feels himself disposed to believe that they possess every natural and moral Excellence in a greater Perfection than others? This Persuasion should be cultivated as far as it can any Way consist with Truth.

The Effect will be highly beneficial in many Instances. It will be so to Children themselves, to conciliate their Regards to the Counsels and Precepts of their Parents: for that Obedience which is the Result of a strong Prejudice in Favour of the Wisdom, Experience, and Good-will of those who govern, is always more easy and pleasant than that which is extorted by a mere Dread of Authority. This Partiality, too, will be highly pleasing to Parents, and add greatly to their Happiness; and as it will cement the Union between both Parties, so will it contribute not a little to domestick Felicity. Besides, this Reverence for their Parents will interest Children in the Defence of their Characters on all Occasions, which is a very important Branch of filial Duty. (*) We

(*) Some of the noblest Actions recorded in prophane and sacred History, are those which have sprung from the warm and undisguised Zeal of Persons of distinguished Virtue for the just Reputation of their Ancestors.

We are ſpeaking of Children's Behaviour where the Parents themſelves do not make-way for Diſreſpect, by any undue Relaxation of Diſcipline. – Nay, Should Parents themſelves be faulty in ſome Part of their Conduct or Character, yet Children are to be very and exceeding backward to ſee it; and it can very ſeldom be allowable for them to ſhew that they do ſee it: From the World they ſhould always conceal it, as far as they can; for, it is ſhocking, beyond Meaſure, in them to publiſh it. (*) - And if even any thing of this Nature MUST be mentioned to the Parents themſelves, which nothing but great Neceſſity can warrant or excuſe, it ſhould be with all poſſible Gentleneſs and with the moſt real Concern at being obliged to ſo unnatural an Office. And for this there is ſo much Reaſon and Decency in Nature, that the contrary ſhocks us unavoidably: – the Hearts of all Men go along with Noah, in laying Puniſhment on Cham for his unnatural and profane Deriſion; and love the Memory of thoſe Sons, that would not ſee themſelves, nor ſuffer others to be Witneſſes of the Miſcarriage of their Father. "Hearken (ſays Solomon) unto thy Fa-

(*) "Glory not in the Diſhonour of thy Father, for thy Father's Diſhonour is no Glory unto thee; For the Glory of a Man is from the Honour of his Father; and a Mother in Diſhonour is a Reproach unto her Children." — *Ea Charitas, quæ eſt inter Natos et Parentes, dirimi, niſi deteſtabili Sceleris, non poteſt.*

Father that begat thee, and despise not thy Mother when she is old." And Moses, — "Cursed be he that setteth light by his Father or Mother."

There is indeed, no worse or greater Token of a bad Disposition in Children, than to see them wanting in Reverence to their Parents in any Kind. (*)

And, that Children may discharge this Part of their Duty better, as it is partly in their Parents Power, so it should be their especial Care and Concern.

They must be careful how they live and behave themselves before their Children. If they make themselves vile in their Children's Eyes, by too much Familiarity, by light and indiscreet Conduct, either towards them, or towards others in their Sight, they will in vain expect that Reverence and Respect that is due to their Relation.

All domestick Differences, therefore, all idle and unseemly Quarrels, with simple and unkind Words and Actions, which too frequently pass between Parents, should be concealed, as much as possible, from Children; for they observe and treasure up these evil Follies, and, secretly, at least, side with the One, and learn

(*) Where no Respect is paid to the Parent, we can hardly expect Obedience to his Commands—and we have seldom any great Love or Esteem for those whom we treat with Levity and Contempt.

learn to hate, or to deſpiſe the Other, or entertain, too ſoon, a mean Opinion of them Both; which undermines all Manner of Eſteem and dutiful Obſervance.

But, — To obviate this Behaviour, and to enforce Reſpect, as much as poſſible, upon Children to their Parents, we ſhould conſider, that,

The greater the Obligations are which we have at any Time laid on others, the better Treatment do we, of courſe, expect in Return, and with the greater Degree of Warmth do we reſent any Injury or Contempt from them; the ſlighteſt Wound gives the moſt exquiſite Pain when inflicted by the Hand we love.

What then muſt the Parent feel; who, inſtead of reciprocal Tenderneſs and Affection, inſtead of that ſubmiſſive Deference, which he has a Right to expect, meets with Surlineſs and Pride, and contemptuous Diſregard from a thankleſs Child! Even Expreſſions of Civility, even that Compliſance and Good-breeding, which to others may appear amiable, in his Eyes, will ſeem cold and diſreſpectful. — And!

How can we perſuade ourſelves to fill that Heart with Anguiſh and Diſquietude, which is ſo ſolicitous for our Welfare; or give a Moment's Uneaſineſs to thoſe who ſpend their Lives in providing for our Wants,

Wants, defending us from Danger, and promoting our preſent and eternal Welfare. (*)

(*) It may be truly ſaid, that if Children are undutiful to their Parents, they ſeldom prove good to any other Relations. The Honour which Children are required to give to their Father and Mother includes in it Love, Reverence, Obedience, and (if required) Relief alſo. Where ſhall we find the Perſon who hath received from *any one* Benefits ſo great, or ſo many, as Children from their Parents? to them in particular they not only owe their very Exiſtence, but all the Advantages they have derived from their Care, Advice, and Education; if therefore Children are baſe and unkind to their Parents, no One can expect Gratitude from ſuch. See No. 263. of the Spectator.

Sermon

SERMON CCCLXXXI.

On the ſame Subject.
Children, to obey their Parents.

Ephe. vi. 1, 2, 3. "Children, obey your Parents in "the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy Father "and Mother, (which is the firſt Commandment "with Promiſe) that it may be well with thee, and "thou mayeſt live long on the Earth."

Beſides Deference and Reſpect, the outward Marks of Love and Eſteem, (already conſidered) there is ſomething more required, [viz] Obedience, which is the ſincereſt Teſtimony of filial Affection. (*) To

(*) *Semper obtemperat pius Filius Patri.*

The beſt Way to make your Children to love and reſpect you when you are old, is to teach them abſolute Obedience when they are young, That being the firſt Virtue a Child is capable of. Certainly, nothing ſinks deeper, or takes faſter Root in the Mind of Man, than thoſe Rules and Precepts learned when a Child.

Solon made a Law, that thoſe Parents ſhould neither be relieved nor regarded in their Old Age by their Children, who took no Care, by a good and virtuous Education in their Youth, to inſtruct them in all the Principles of their Duty: and Socrates ſays, He that makes his Son worthy of Eſteem, by giving him a liberal Education,

To "HONOUR our Parents" is to OBEY them, is to ſubmit implicitly to their Orders, and dutifully to perform whatever is enjoined by them. "Children, obey your Parents;" (i.e) liſten to their Inſtructions, and be obedient to their Commands. It is both active and paſſive. Active, in obſerving all their Commands, that are not contrary to the Laws of God; and paſſive, in ſuffering their Anger and Reſentment, with all Patience and Submiſſion, when they require to be performed what is ſinful; rather than to diſobey God. If they chaſten

cation, has a far better Title to his Obedience, than he that gives him a large Eſtate without it.

Parents, who take care, to improve the Minds of their Children in true Religion and Virtue, will but rarely be diſappointed of a due Return. Indeed Love alone, mere natural Affection, may not be depended on, being regarded as a thing of Courſe, which a Child is not concerned to return; and which loſes much of its Force, when the Child meets with other Objects to divert its Affections. But a Mind trained up in Wiſdom and Virtue can never be ungrateful to its beſt Benefactors; the early Impreſſions of a well-managed Authority are never wholly effaced. And conſidering the Advantages which Nature gives Parents, it is eaſy to eſtabliſh a laſting Dominion over the ſupple Spirits if they are not intoxicated into a ſhameful Neglect of their Children and themſelves. For Children are eaſily taught to ſtand in Awe of their Parents, to regard their Perſons as ſacred, and their Commands as indiſputable.

Happy Parents, who thus ſecure the beſt Love of their Children! Happy Children, who love and obey their Parents; they ſhall be bleſt of their God; they ſhall not fail of their Reward!

Serm. CCCLXXXI.

chaſten and correct you for their own Pleaſure, yet you are to reverence them, and bear with their Infirmities; you are to conceal, and not expoſe their Weakneſs to others. (*)

This Duty, in both theſe Senſes, is founded in the Law of God, and alſo enjoined by the Dictates of Reaſon: foraſmuch as Parents are our natural Superiors; and becauſe they are better Judges and Directors of our Conduct, from the Advantage of more Years and Experience, than we can poſſibly be for ourſelves.

Children, for a conſiderable Time are utterly unqualified to govern themſelves; and ſo long as this continues to be the Caſe, an abſolute and unlimited Obedience is required from them by thoſe who alone can claim a Title to it: (‡) "Children obey your Parents in ALL things, for this is acceptable and well-pleaſing to the Lord" – "it ſhall be an Ornament, and a Grace unto thee."

"My Son, keep thy Father's Commandments, and forſake not the Law of thy Mother – bind them continually about thy Neck, and write them upon thine Heart, – when thou goeſt, it ſhall lead thee; when thou

(*) See Page 306.

(‡) Whilſt Children want Underſtanding to direct their Choice and Will, they ſhould have no Will but that of their Parents; and therefore ſhould obey till arrived at a more ſound Judgment.

Conſilium ad ſperne meum, tibi Fama petatur.

thou ſleepeſt, it ſhall keep thee; and when thou awakeſt, it ſhall talk with thee; for the Commandment is a Lamp; and the Law is Light; and Reproofs of Inſtruction are the Way of Life, to keep thee from Evil." And again, "Receive Inſtruction, and not Silver, and Knowledge rather than choice Gold — for Wiſdom is better than Rubies, and all the things that can be deſired, are not to be compared unto it." "Hear Counſel, and receive Inſtruction, that thou mayeſt be wiſe in thy latter End."

As Children grow up to Years of Underſtanding, and they can diſcern Good from Evil, Reaſon ſhould be gradually mixed with Authority in every thing that is required of them: And, at the ſame Time, Children ſhould obſerve (what they very eaſily may find to be true, in daily Inſtances) that they are apt to think they know how to direct themſelves much ſooner than they really do; and ſhould therefore ſubmit to be directed by their Friends in more Points, and for a longer Time than, perhaps, they would naturally be inclined to wiſh. — But,

If, from the Benefit of a happier Genius, or a better Education, they arrive to greater Clearneſs of Judgment and Strength of Reaſon than their Parents, yet ſtill, as long as they continue a Part of their Family, they are to pay them that Obedience that is due to

them as Maſters of their own Houſehold; and therefore are never to ſwerve from their Commands, unleſs they ſhould enjoin ſomething contrary to the Commands of God: in that Caſe (and in that alone) their Diſobedience muſt be excuſed from the prior Obligation they owe to their Creator, whoſe Commands no Man can controul or diſpenſe with: and even in this Caſe, after they have made all the modeſt and dutiful Remonſtrances in their Power, they are to obey them paſſively; that is, patiently to ſubmit to ſuch Chaſtiſement as they ſhall think fit to inflict for their Diſobedience. (*) For altho' they ſhould chaſten us after their own Pleaſure, (as the Apoſtle intimates,) yet we are to "give them Reverence." And ſurely we ought, in common Gratitude as well as Juſtice, to bear with their Infirmities, who have ſo often and ſo long borne with ours.

The Duties comprehended in this Idea, we ſhall conſider in Reference to Matters CIVIL and RELIGIOUS; regarding, as we paſs along, the different Ages, Capacities, and Circumſtances of Children. And,

1ſt. As to CIVIL Matters. — In this Deſcription we include what relates to Food, Dreſs, Company, Amuſements, Deportment, Learning, Diſcipline, and, in a Word, every thing which the Morals of Children are converſant about. The Will of the Parents, in Regard of all theſe Matters, under the Reſtrictions

(*) See Matt. v. 10.

which

which will be hereafter mentioned, ſhould be dutifully complied with.

In the earlieſt Stage of Life, Obedience is the Reſult of Inſtinct, not Reaſoning. Caſt, as Infants are, in this helpleſs State upon the Care of others, they are under a Neceſſity of ſubmitting. But when they begin to acquire Strength, and to become capable of reſiſting, they ſhould, upon the general Idea of filial Duty, obey. For tho they may not be able clearly to comprehend the Fitneſs of what is required of them, they may yet have Senſe enough to perceive, that the Age, Authority, and Affection of their Parents, give them a Right to demand Submiſſion and Obedience. And for Children poſſeſſing this Idea, to diſpute the Point with them, in any Matter inſiſted on, is to offend againſt the Deciſion of their own Reaſon.

Parents muſt be allowed to diſcern what is moſt proper for their Children; and tho they may be now and then miſtaken, yet it is always ſafeſt to follow their Commands and Inſtructions, whoſe main End and Purpoſe is to do them good: nothing can be plainer than that Parents love their Children moſt affectionately, and without Deſign (*) – and are older, wiſer and more ex-

(*) The Magiſtrate may, and perhaps often doth, compel his Inferior to Actions highly diſpleaſing, and ſometimes extremely pernicious to him, becauſe he has a ſecret View to his own Advance-

experienced; and therefore the fitteſt to command, and to be obeyed by their Children. (*) — But,

Leſt theſe Reaſons ſhould not prevail, God, to ſhew as how fit it is to obey our Parents, calls himſelf our Father, and, from that Relation, claims our Obedience to him; — ſo that he who is diſobedient, offends againſt Command as well as Reaſon, againſt God as well as Man. — Indeed,

So

ment. The General may force his Soldiers to ruſh on Danger and Death, to procure his Glory; and the deſpotic Tyrant may ſacrifice Millions of his Subjects to his own Pride and Ambition. But the Father has no private Intereſt to promote in Oppoſition to his Children—no Ambition but to make them amiable—no Views but to make them happy. Here then, there can be no Doubt or Jealouſy. The Relation they ſtand in, exempts them from the leaſt Suſpicion of Fraud or Treachery; And I in a World, where there is ſcarce any thing elſe, how ineſtimable is ſuch Sincerity!

(*) In all Controverſies between Parents and their Children, we are naturally prejudiced in Favour of the former. The Obligation on their Side can never be acquitted. And doubtleſs, it is one of the greateſt Reflections upon human Nature, that Paternal Inſtinct ſhould be a ſtronger Motive to Love, than filial Gratitude; that the receiving of Favours ſhould be a leſs Inducement to Goodwill, Tenderneſs and Commiſeration, than the confering of them; and that the taking-care of any Perſon, ſhould endear the Child, or Dependant, more to the Parent or Benefactor—than the Parent or Benefactor, to the Child; But ſo it happens, that for *one* cruel Parent, we meet with a *thouſand* undutiful Children. This is, indeed, wonderfully contrived for the Support of every living Species; but, at the ſame Time that it ſhews the Wiſdom of the Creator, it diſcovers the Imperfection and Degeneracy of the Creatures.

So agreeable to the Law of Nature and Reaſon is this important Duty, as to be held even by the unenlightened Heathens in the higheſt Eſteem and Veneration: - "He that is undutiful to his Parents, (ſays the Athenian Law) ſhall be incapable of holding any Office." The wiſe and pious Rulers in thoſe Times, were, doubtleſs, of Opinion, that no Obligations could influence, no Ties could bind the Man, who had broken thro the Bonds of Nature; that the Love of his Country could never reſide in that Breaſt which was void of filial Affection; that where the Father's Authority was ſlighted, the Magiſtrate would be but ill ſubmitted to; and that He, in ſhort, muſt be very unfit to rule, who had never learned to obey. (*)

Hence, if we may be allowed a ſmall Digreſſion, appears the Importance of taking-pains with Children, at this early Age, to impreſs their Minds with the general Obligations of filial Obedience. Parents ſhould now ſteadily aſſert their Authority, and inſiſt that they will at all Events be obeyed, letting their Children know, by their Words and Actions, that they have Power over them, that God has given them that Power, and that they hold it by the Conſent of all Mankind. But, at the ſame Time, they ſhould be alike aſſiduous to ſecure their cordial Affection, by convincing them that they cannot poſſibly mean to do them any Harm,

(*) See the Note, Page 309. Serm. 38. but,

but, on the contrary, all the Good in their Power. So Children will be perſuaded, that it is their Intereſt, as well as their Duty, to obey, even though what is required does not fall in with their Inclinations.

But if a Child at this early Age is froward, obſtinate, and unyielding, and a Parent, thro' falſe Tenderneſs, ſuffers him to violate his Commands, the latter is as much, yea more to blame than the former: and if ſuch Perverſeneſs is not ſubdued, the Conſequence will, in all Probability, be fatal to them both. — But to return.

When Reaſon further opens, and Children become capable of clearly perceiving, not only the Authority their Parents have over them, but the Difference between Good and Evil, between Juſtice and Injuſtice, Truth and Falſehood, Humility and Pride, Meekneſs and Paſſion, Gratitude and Ill-nature, &c. then their Obligations to Obedience increaſe; for their Parents requiring them to do what their own Judgment teaches them ought to be done, Authority and Conſcience unite to enforce Submiſſion. And, of Conſequence, every Act of Diſobedience, in ſuch Caſe, is more criminal than before; for they are now guilty both of acting contrary to a Conviction of what is in itſelf right, and alſo of treating the Authority of their Parents with Contempt. But further,

When Children arrive at mature Age, tho they are

to

to be justified in disobeying such Commands as are directly opposed to the clear Dictates of their own Reason and Judgment, yet they ought to listen respectfully to the Commands of their Parents, and in Cases of a doubtful Nature, on which Age and Experience are better capable of deciding, it is both their Wisdom and Duty to yield to their Opinion.

"My Son, (says Solomon) hear the Instruction of thy Father, and forsake not the Law of thy Mother: for they shall be an Ornament of Grace to thy Head, and Chains about thy Neck." And most certainly it should be their assiduous Concern, to please their Parents, even to the latest Period of their Lives, by conforming to their Will, not only in Matters of Importance that are just and right, but in Matters perfectly indifferent, and which do not oppose the Laws of God, or affect the Rights and Privileges of Conscience. (*)

In fine, It is an Argument of good Sense and filial Duty in Children to take pains to impress this important Sentiment on their Minds, during their Minority especially, that their Parents consider their Interests as their own, and are much better capable of judging in most Cases, what is expedient for them, than they for themselves. Under this Persuasion every Act of Obedience will be easy and pleasant, and draw after it the happiest

(*) See Page 318, 320. Serm. CCCLXXXI.

happieſt Conſequences to both Parties: while, on the contrary, Ill-humour, Diſcontent, and Refractorineſs will not fail at once to afflict the injured Parent, and to make the undutiful Child himſelf miſerable. But,

There is one Inſtance, wherein Obedience to Parents is of more Importance to Children than any other in Life, and yet where they too often fail to pay it; and that is, in the Article of Marriage: for as long as Children continue a Part of their Parents' Family, (which muſt be till they think fit to diſpoſe otherwiſe of them,) they are abſolutely in their Parents' Power, and have no more Right to diſpoſe of themſelves, than they have to diſpoſe of the Parents' Fortune or Inheritance, or any of their Goods: and therefore we find the Parental Authority of ſo great Extent in the Law of Moſes, that "the Daughter who made a Vow unknown to her Father," was not allowed to ratify it without his Conſent. (*)

But the Inſtitution of the ancient Romans carried this Point a great deal higher, and made Children dependant upon the Parental Authority during their whole Lives: nor could the higheſt Honours or Authority in the Common-Wealth exempt them from it. (†) They

(*) Numb. xxxth Chapter.

(†) A Father in Rome could call down his Son from the Roſtrum, in the midſt of his Harangue to the People, to puniſh him for any Miſdemeanour; he could command him in the ſame Manner from the Senate, or from the Head of his Legions. Nor did the People, the Senate, or the Army, dare to interpoſe in his Defence.

They conſidered the Duty to Parents as a prior Obligation, which nothing ſubſequent could cancel, And doubtleſs, this was one Reaſon why the Roman Marriages continued ſo long ſacred and undiſturbed; becauſe they were never made, but with the Advice and Deliberation of their Parents. And, indeed, the contrary Conduct is an Inſtance of Diſobedience, that commonly carries its own Puniſhment with it; and there are few who have been guilty of it, who have not had Reaſon to repent very ſincerely of it to the laſt Day of their Lives. And the Reaſon of this is evident;

The Perſons that take the Eyes of Young People moſt, are ſuch as are ſkilled in the courtly Forms and Faſhions of the World; ſuch as have laid themſelves out to dreſs and dance, and acquire ſuch ſuperficial and ſhewy Accompliſhments, as are too often at the greateſt Diſtance from Modeſty, good Nature, and good Senſe; and above all, from ſolid Principles of true Religion and Virtue, which are the true Foundations of all conjugal Accompliſhments. (*)

Prudent Parents well know, that the true conjugal Attractions ariſe, not from outward Ornament, but inward Excellence. This is a Law eſtabliſhed in Morality, and is in exact Analogy to that great Law eſtabliſhed in Nature; which teaches us, that the Attrac-

tions

(*) See Page 44. &c.

ons of Bodies are not in Proportion to their Surface, but their ſolid Contents. Prudent Parents well know, that ſuch Accompliſhments as either ariſe from, or tend to eſtabliſh true Worth, can alone render any Pair happy in an Union that muſt laſt for Life. This, all prudent Parents very well know; and therefore are beſt fitted to make a right Choice for their Children; but ſtill with this Caution, that they do not offer Violence to their Inclinations, by forcing them to marry againſt their Will. For the reſt, it were infinitely better, that perverſe Children ſhould actually die in the Diſappointment of their Inclinations, than that they ſhould make both themſelves and their Parents forever miſerable, by an unfortunate & undutiful Marriage. (*)

Hitherto we have been ſpeaking of Moral Duties only, ſuch as are diſcoverable by the Light of Nature, and which we owe to ourſelves, and our Fellow-creatures.—Our View is now extended further,

2dly, To Matters of Religion, (i.e) to Diſcoveries which God is ſuppoſed to have made of himſelf, and the Manner he is to be worſhipped by a poſitive Revelation.

The Opinions of Mankind differ here, and a great Variety of Sentiments reſpecting it, have ever prevailed in the World. The Queſtion before us, therefore, is, How far the Religion of Parents is binding upon their Chil-

(*) See Page 35.

Children? Or what Influence the Opinion, Profeſſion, and Authority of Parents are to have upon filial Obedience?

For the better Illuſtration of this Point, we ſhall proceed here by Steps, as we have already done under the former Particular. And,

1ſt. When Children are in the earlieſt Stage of Life, and incapable of judging of theſe Matters, it is, doubtleſs, their indiſpenſible Duty to treat the Religion of their Parents (whatever it be,) with decent Reſpect, and to conform regularly to the Externals of it; for no Man can bear to ſee his Creed or his Devotion laughed at by any, much leſs by his Children. (*)

Moſes ſays, "Thou ſhalt not revile the Gods:" his Meaning, perhaps, was, prudentially to forbid an indecent and opprobrious Treatment of the Religion of the Country where we happen to be, however contrary it may be to our own Views. And if ſo, this Precept of his does in Effect ſtill more ſtrongly forbid a ſimilar Behaviour in Children towards the Religion of their Parents. But,

That abſolute Obedience in Matters of Religion which

(*) This Rule extends to all Sorts of Religion, Pagan, Mahometan, and Chriſtian; and to all the different Profeſſions in each of them; for it is a Violation of the Law of Nature for Children, (who are not yet *ſui Juris*) to treat the Opinion or Worſhip of their Parents with Diſreſpect and Contempt.

which Parents have a right to exact of their Children during their Minority, becomes more and more limited or conditional as they approach to Years of Diſcretion. As ſoon as they are capable of perceiving the Grounds on which the Religion of their Parents ſtands, it is their unqueſtionable Duty to enquire into thoſe Grounds. (*) Enquiry is what Parents ought to enjoin, and it is one Part of filial Obedience to comply with ſuch Injunctions. And while Reaſon teaches that they ſhould not take their Religion abſolutely on Truſt, it teaches alſo that they are under the ſtrongeſt Obligations to liſten ſeriouſly to what is offered in Favour of it. A Child ought to ſuppoſe, unleſs he has evident Proof to the contrary, that his Father is ſincere and in earneſt, in preſſing theſe Matters upon him. And if this Perſuaſion does not awaken his Attention, and put him upon the moſt diligent Enquiry, he is chargeable with manifeſt Undutifulneſs & Diſaffection.

So far parental Authority ſhould influence Children. And its Uſe thus far, be their Parents Religion true or falſe, is very conſiderable. If it be falſe, filial Attachment, by thus exciting them to Enquiry, is an Advantage, as it becomes an Occaſion of their detecting the miſtaken Grounds of ſuch Religion, and ſo of diſſenting, for juſt Reaſons, from it. And if it be true,

(*) See Vol. vii. Page 102, &c. ſee alſo Note (‡) xvii. 22.

true, the ſame filial Attachment is of Uſe, as it thus becomes the Occaſion of their poſſeſſing a ſatisfactory Evidence of the Truth of what they before only preſumed to be true.

But when filial Attachment precludes Enquiry, and has no other Effect than to beget a mere implicit Faith, the Obedience which reſults from ſuch Faith is reprehenſible and criminal. Conformity to the Religion of our Parents, on this Ground, is Diſobedience to the Voice of Reaſon and of God.

The Amount of the Whole is, in ſhort, this; filial Duty demands, on the Part of Children, when they become capable of reaſoning, the moſt ſober and diligent Attention to the Inſtruction of their Parents in Matters of Religion: but it does not require implicit Aſſent and Obedience. On the contrary, ſuch Aſſent and Obedience yielded to parental Authority, without Enquiry, and more eſpecially in Contradiction to the Senſe and Dictate of Conſcience, is a Violation of the Allegiance due to God only.

When the Woman of Samaria had liſtened to our Saviour's Diſcourſe, and was perſuaded on the fulleſt Conviction of his being the Meſſiah; ſhe immediately informed her Relations, her Neighbours, and Acquaintance, of what had happened, and entreated them to "come and ſee the Man who had told her all ſhe

ever did." The Conduct of the Samaritans on this Occaſion, was preciſely ſuch as filial Duty requires of Children towards their Parents in Matters of Religion, when they are capable of judging of them. The Samaritans did not abſolutely refuſe their Aſſent to the Woman's Report. They went out of the City to Chriſt, heard him themſelves, and then declared that they believed, not merely becauſe of her ſaying, but becauſe, having heard him, they were perſuaded, upon the ſame Grounds which had convinced her, that he was indeed the Chriſt, the Saviour of the World.

It is here further to be obſerved, that however Children may ſee Reaſon, upon calm and ſerious Enquiry, to diſſent from the Religion of their Parents; they are nevertheleſs obliged to treat both them and their Profeſſion with all decent Reſpect. Inſtead of contumeliouſly affronting the One or the Other, it is rather their Duty decently to throw a Veil over them, as Shem and Japheth did over the Nakedneſs of their Father. — But,

As there are many Caſes in which Children plead Exemption from theſe Rules, and yet defend themſelves as no Tranſgreſſors of them; it may be of ſome Uſe to ſee in what Particulars they are obliged to obey without Reſerve, and in what they are at Liberty; that the Duty of Children, and the juſt Authority of Parents, may both of them be ſecured. And, 1ſt.

1ſt. Though the Command in Scripture is general, and Children are required to obey their Parents "in ALL things," yet it is certain, their Authority is not altogether abſolute. (*) For,

If the Command of a Parent is to do Evil, the Command of God muſt be obeyed before that of a Parent: The Authority of God is firſt and greateſt, and nothing is to ſtand in Competition with it.

This

(*) Reaſon, and the Nature of things, and the general Uſage of all Language, ſhew, that in theſe and other the like Expreſſions, the Phraſe, *In every thing*, and *in all things*, muſt neceſſarily be underſtood to mean only, in all things *juſt, lawful, honeſt*, and *fit to be done*.

In Human Writings, theſe general Manners of Expreſſion, ariſing from the known and common Uſe of Language, are never miſunderſtood; and therefore to miſunderſtand them in the *ſacred* Books *only*, is mere Perverſeneſs. The Goſpel neither enlarges nor diminiſhes any Superior's Power; It neither adds to, nor takes from any Inferior's Right. In theſe Caſes, it only confirms and explains the Obligations of Nature; and enforces the Practice of the reſpective Duties, with ſtronger and more powerful Motives.

As therefore in all other Writings, ſo in Scripture likewiſe; the true, the natural, and evident Meaning of ſuch Phraſes as theſe, "in "All things—In Every thing," and the like, is not what the Word, All, ſuggeſts in its *ſingle* Signification; but what the *common* Senſe of it is, in ſuch Expreſſions and Sentences.

In all Languages, the Signification of *every* Word neceſſarily depends upon the *other* Words with which it is connected: and where no Controverſy is concerned, nor Prejudice interpoſes, it is always underſtood, and cannot but be underſtood to be ſo, by all Underſtandings, and by all Capacities equally, from the Higheſt to the Meaneſt.

This Limitation ſeems to be expreſſed in the Words immediately ſubjoined. — "Obey your Parents IN THE LORD;" that is, ſo far as is conſiſtent with the Regard you owe to the Authority of God. But,

Even in this, the Command of God muſt be ſo plain, and withal of ſuch Moment, as may juſtify a Child, not only in his own Judgment, which may eaſily be prejudiced, but in that of every conſiderate Perſon alſo, whom they have Opportunity of conſulting, and in the general Opinion of Mankind: — and, even then, the Refuſal muſt be accompanied with the greateſt Decency and Humility, and the greateſt Care to make-amends by the Inſtances of real Duty, for this one ſeeming Want of it.

But there is no great Danger on this Head, but we ſhall have full Scope to oblige and pleaſe both our Father and Mother, without the Danger of violating any One of God's Commandments: for, even Parents, who cannot prevail upon themſelves to be virtuous and good, would yet wiſh, and will kindly and wiſely exhort their Children to deſerve that Character. There is no Envy in their Hearts; they will be glad to ſee themſelves excelled by their Children as far as poſſible, and their Advice will be ſafe, though their Example may be dangerous. Again,

Should a Parent command any thing of Conſequence, directly

directly oppoſite to the Laws of the Land, and the Injunctions of Publick Authority: Here, the Magiſtrate, being the Supreme Power, in all things confeſſedly belonging to his Juriſdiction, is to be obeyed rather than the Parent, who ought himſelf to be ſubject to the Magiſtrate.

Should a Father (for Inſtance) command his Son to betray his Country, to bear falſe Witneſs, to give his Opinion contrary to the Laws, or be inſtrumental to the overthrowing the Conſtitutions of the Kingdom; he muſt not ſo honour his Father, as to obey any ſuch Commands; Children are in all ſuch Caſes, to appeal to their Parents better informed; they are to preſume them as always willing, that their Children ſhould do juſt and honeſt things; and are, therefore, not ſo much to mind what they bid them do, when CONCERNED, as what they would have them do, when out of that Concern (*) — But further,

As our Obedience to Parents is to ceaſe, where the Authority of God, or the Government has laid a Prohibition; ſo it is ſuppoſed not to be required, where the thing under Command carries an invincible Diſlike to our Inclinations. The

(*) *Ageſilaus*, in Reply to his Father, adviſing him to give Judgment againſt the Laws, ſaid, "Sir, you yourſelf have taught me to obſerve the Laws from my Youth up; and I am now going to obey you, in taking-care to keep them." Plutarch. CCCLXXXI.

The common Inſtance of this Kind is in the Caſe of Marriage, which being a State and Condition, upon which the Happineſs or Miſery of Life depends, cannot be enterprized with any Hopes of Felicity, without a real Affection on one Side, and a good Aſſurance of it on the other. But,

When a Parent, over-looking all this, will enjoin a Child, upon mere Motives of Advantage, to marry, where there is no Foundation of Love, nor Proſpect of Content, it is hardly to be thought, that ſuch Inſtances are to be complied with. In ſuch a Caſe, Children may refuſe; and if their Refuſal be made with Decency and Reſpect, it cannot fall under the Head of ſinful Diſobedience. (*)

If a Son would marry againſt the Conſent of the Parent, or the Father obtrude a Match on the Son, the plain Reſolution in each Caſe, is, the Father and Son have ſeverally a Negative: for, notwithſtanding Parents have great Authority, yet they may abuſe it; they are not incapable of doing Injury to their Children, who are to be ſubject to their Parents, but not Slaves to their Paſſions. (†)

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(*) See No. 281, of the Spectator.

(†) *Poſquàm exceſſit ex Ephebis, liberùs vivendi fuit Poteſtas; antè verò, Ætas, Metus, Magiſter prohibebant.* Terence.

In Proportion as Young Perſons approach to that Age, when the Law allows them to be capable of governing themſelves, they become

I ſhall only add further, on this Head, that if contrary Orders are given by the two Parents, the Child is bound to obey THAT Parent rather, whom the other is bound to obey alſo: (*) but ſtill preſerving to each all due Reverence, from which, nothing, not even the Command of either, can diſcharge him.

come by Degrees leſs and leſs ſubject to the Government of their Parents—tho' at no Time ſo free as to ſlight, or willingly to grieve them; but in all proper Affairs to conſult with them, to hearken to, and comply with their Advice, as far as it can be expected in Reaſon and Gratitude. See Page 274, &c. and 330.

(*) *Dominum Servus, et Dominum ſequitur Famula. Eſt Ordo naturalis in Hominibus, ut ſerviant Feminæ Viris, et Filii Parentibus, quòd illis hæc Juſtitia eſt, ut Majori ſerviat Minor.*

Sermon

SERMON CCCLXXXII.

On the same Subject.

Children, to support their Parents, and not to grieve them.

Ephe. vi. 1, 2, 3. "Children, obey your Parents in "the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy Father "and Mother, (which is the first Commandment "with Promise) that it may be well with thee, and "thou mayest live long on the Earth."

The Duties owing from Children to their Parents (as already considered) are Love, Respect, and Obedience. — But further,

By HONOURING our Parents is further meant the giving them all the Assistance, Support and Defence, which they may at any Time stand in need of—a thankful and grateful Return of all the Blessings and Benefits conferred upon us by them, as far as we are able, in a Word, every Kind of Assistance that can be afforded them, to render their last Days easy and comfortable. (*) And! How worthy Parents are of this, as well

(*) By one of the Laws of Solon, he is accounted ἄτιμος, infamous, who did not provide for his Parents.

well as of the other Sorts of Honour, when they need it, ſufficiently appears from all that hath been already ſaid. If they deſerve to be loved and reſpected, ſurely they are not to be left expoſed to Diſtreſs & Want by thoſe whom they have brought into Life, and for whom they have done ſo much.

The Pooreſt, therefore, ſhould be diligent to keep their helpleſs Parents from Extremities; and if they are in competently good Circumſtances, ſhould allow them a liberal Share of the Plenty which they themſelves enjoy. For, "He that forſaketh his Father is a Blaſphemer; and he that angreth his Mother is curſed of God." Accordingly, St. Paul expreſsly enjoins, that "if any Widows have Children or Nephews," (i.e) Grand-children, (for ſo the Word always means in Scripture,) "let them learn firſt to ſhew Piety at Home, and to requite their Parents; for this is good and acceptable before God."

The Apoſtle mentions the Children of Widows in particular, becauſe Widowhood is a Condition in Life moſt ſubject to Want and Diſtreſs; and where Children, taking the Advantage of the Weakneſs of a helpleſs Mother, are moſt apt to be rebellious and undutiful: the Purpoſe of the Apoſtle in this Precept being to imply, from this particular Inſtance, the Duty of Obedience, and Support, and Retribution, due from

Children to Parents, whenever the ill State of their Affairs requires it; and even when they are leaſt in a Condition to exact their Gratitude, or to puniſh their Diſobedience. Which, therefore, they are to conſider not as an Alms, given to an Inferior; but as a Tribute of Duty, paid to a Superior. For which Reaſon perhaps it may be, that relieving them is mentioned under the Notion of HONOURING them. — Indeed!

Such are the Viciſſitudes of human Life, that it is no ſtrange or uncommon Circumſtance, to ſee Penury or Diſtreſs uſurp the Seats of Joy and Plenty; to ſee thoſe who had floriſhed in the earlieſt Part of Life in Affluence and Proſperity, reduced, at the Cloſe of it, to Want and Miſery, obliged to ſtruggle with the World at an Age when they are moſt unfit to encounter it, and inſtead of reſting in Peace, after a troubleſome Journey, compelled to bear the Heat and Burden of the Day.

Here then, filial Piety hath the nobleſt Opportunity of exerting its Gratitude: and all that a Child can do, is no more than what he is ſtrictly bound to do; and, no Danger is ſo great, nor Toil ſo ſevere, but in ſuch a Caſe he ſhould readily go thro, and willingly bear.

A numerous Family, to clothe and to feed, has often ſunk thoſe, who, without it, might have lived in the utmoſt Splendor: to the Weight of the Branches the

Tree

Tree may owe its Decay. Here the Obligation receives new Force. To relieve the Wants we ourſelves have cauſed, is but common Juſtice. To heal the Wounds which we ourſelves have made, is but common Humanity. (*)

It is diſtreſſing indeed to ſee Old-age, which ſhould have nothing but its own Infirmities to ſtruggle with, ſinking under the Preſſures of Penury and Want; and eſpecially when this is the Effect of the imprudent Arrangement of their Affairs, in Favour of unnatural Children. For ſurely nothing can be more fooliſh, than for Parents, whom Providence has bleſſed with an Affluence of the things of this Life, to throw themſelves into a State of abſolute Dependence on their Children. If this is at any Time done, through an Exceſs of Fondneſs on the one Part, and in Compliance with avaricious Views on the other; very ſlender Returns of filial Reverence and Affection are to be expected. (‡) Such unhappy Parents have, in too many Inſtances, lived to ſee their imprudent Confidence abuſed, and their incautious Generoſity rewarded with Neglect, if not Contempt. The Idea, however, of ſecuring the Homage and Obedience of Children, by parſimoniouſly

(*) Amongſt the Romans, if a Father came to Want, and the Son, if able, did not relieve him, he was ſentenced by the Laws againſt Ingratitude, to be the Father's Slave for Life.

(‡) See the Note, Page 181. Serm. 38.

moniouſly withholding from them the neceſſary Means of improving their Fortunes in Life, is as miſtaken a Conduct on the other Hand. A Competency is all a prudent and good Parent would wiſh to reſerve to himſelf, when Eaſe and Retirement are his only Objects as to this World, except it be the Gratification of a benevolent Diſpoſition, in the little Circle of declining Life. — But,

Poſſeſſed of an uncontrouled Competency, there are yet many Offices of Kindneſs requiſite on the Part of Children, to render the cloſing Scene of Life comfortable. Attention, Reverence, Sympathy, and an aſſiduous Wiſh to pleaſe, are the proper Cordials to be adminiſtered to Old-age, by the tender Hands of filial Affection. And theſe are Cordials which dutiful Children will account it their higheſt Honour and Happineſs to adminiſter to the lateſt Period. (*)

Age, we know, has always a melancholy Attendance. Infirmities vex, Diſeaſes torment, and Death affrights it: Health ſcarce enlivens, and Sickneſs totally depreſſes it: it calls for the Compaſſion, therefore, and Aſſiſtance

(*) Me let the tender Office long engage
To rock the Cradle of repoſing Age;
With lenient Arts extend a Parent's Breath,
Make Languor ſmile, and ſmooth the Bed of Death;
Explore the Thought, explain the aſking Eye.
And keep a while one Parent from the Sky! *Pope.*

ance of all: from Man to Man, it implores them as Favours; from the Parent to his Children, it demands them as a Debt; the greateſt indeed we can contract, and the firſt we are bound to diſcharge. (*)

"My Son, (ſays the Wiſe Man) help thy Father in his Age, and grieve him not as long as he liveth; and if his Underſtanding fail," (i.e) if he come to his ſecond Childhood, and be not ſo wiſe as formerly, "have Patience with him, and deſpiſe him not, when thou art in thy full Strength;" for he is yet your Parent, and your Duty is not diminiſhed. "The relieving of thy Father ſhall not be forgotten: it ſhall be added to build thee up; in the Day of Affliction it ſhall be remembered."

(*) The Fretfulneſs and Severity of Old-age would be a poor Plea for the Omiſſion of filial Duty; nor can the petulent Frowardneſs or wanton Folly of Children by any Means excuſe a Parent's Neglect or Contempt of them.—A Siſter's Ignorance, her Weakneſs, or even her Crimes, muſt no utterly blot out a Brother's Tenderneſs; nor a Brother's Cruelty deſtroy a Siſter's Affection.

Ye are the Children of one Father, provided for by his Care, and the Breaſt of one Mother hath given you Support. Let the Bonds of Affection, therefore, unite thee with thy Brothers, that Peace and Happineſs may dwell in thy Father's Houſe. And, when ye ſeparate in the World, remember the Relation that bindeth you to Love and Unity, and prefer not a Stranger before thine own Blood. If thy Brother is in Adverſity, aſſiſt him; if thy Siſter is in Trouble, forſake her not. So ſhall the Fortunes of thy Father contribute to the Support of his whole Race, and his Care be continued to you all, in your Love to each other. — *Fratres dilige, et Matris Conciliis ne deſperaveris.* Serm. CCCLXXXII.

ed." Again, "Honour thy Father with thy whole Heart, and forget not the Sorrows of thy Mother.—Remember thou waſt begotten of them, and how canſt thou recompenſe them the things they have done for thee?" They cannot give your Patience more Exerciſe, than you have given theirs. They will not live to let you clear your Obligations. Pay what you will, you will ſtill be in Arrears. Your Felicity muſt be ſingular, or their Diſtreſs, if you "recompenſe them the things they have done for thee." (*)

The pious Returns due from Children to Parents are at once the ſtrongeſt Dictates of Gratitude and Juſtice, and are but a poor Retribution for all the Care and Expence of Education, for all the anxious Thoughts, the ſleepleſs Nights, and watchful Days your Parents have paſſed for you; for all the tormenting Fears, the affectionate Hopes, and all the unutterable Concern, which they have paſſed in Solicitude for our Welfare, and in Diſtreſs for our ill Health, and ill Conduct.

The Obligation, indeed, is not eaſily recompenſed, becauſe it is not eaſily known. True Generoſity always enhances the Value of the Gift by Concealment. Innumerable Inſtances of Parental Tenderneſs paſs over, and

(*) *Dis, Parentibus, et Magistris, non potest reddi Æquivalens.* Indeed, by the Law of Solon, Children baſely born were not obliged to maintain their Parents. In ſuch high Reputation did civilized Nations hold the Marriage Relation.

and are forgotten, and thouſands are never ſeen.

"The Father (ſaith the Wiſe Man) waketh for the Daughter when no Man knoweth it, and the Care for her taketh away Sleep." (*) Could you be ſenſible of theſe things, a ſympathetic Gratitude would fill your Souls, and you would think it your higheſt Happineſs, (as it is your indiſpenſible Duty) by every poſſible Means to make them ſome Amend; and to ſooth the Decline of their Days with all the lenient Aſſuatives of filial Piety and Love. And will you requite all this Affection with Ingratitude and Neglect? will you let them ſuffer under any Neceſſity which you can relieve, who ſupported you for ſo many Years of helpleſs Want? will you deſpiſe their Perſons, of whom yourſelves are a Part?—ſurely, if the Ingenuity of Nature, and the Principles of Reaſon and Virtue, are not quite extinguiſhed in you, the Love and Solicitude your Parents have long felt for you, will exact ample Returns from you: if not in equal Meaſure, (which perhaps is not poſſible,) yet in the fulleſt, the ampleſt, the moſt acceptable that is in your Power to make.

The Courſe and Compaſs of God's Providence, and his Methods of eſtabliſhing and evidencing the Meaſures of reciprocal Duty, is no-where more remarkable than in the mutual Obligations between Parents and their Children. The

(*) *Res eſt ſoliciti plena Timoris Amor.* Serm. CCCLXXXII.

The Child comes into the World naked and helpleſs, and from himſelf, more deſtitute of the natural Means of Security and Support, than almoſt any of the inferior Creatures. In this Exigency, the parental Care and Tenderneſs ſteps-in to his Relief; ſupplies all his Neceſſities, and relieves all his Wants; bears with all his untowardly Diſpoſitions, at an Age when he is neither capable of being corrected, or convinced; and not only provides the propereſt Food for him, when he is incapable of providing any for himſelf, but likewiſe adminiſters it when he is incapable of feeding himſelf, bears with all the Degrees of his Folly and Impertinence; liſtens to all his trifling and idle Inquiries, not with Patience, but with Pleaſure; till they gradually conduct him to Health, and Strength, and Knowledge: but the Child is not long arrived at this Perfection of his Nature, before his Parents begin to fall gradually into the ſame Infirmities through which they but lately conducted and ſupported their Children; and to need the ſame Aſſiſtance which they lately lent. They begin to grow ſickly; and therefore again call for the Aid of that Health which they cultivated and took care of in their Children. The Loſs of Cheerfulneſs and Good-humour commonly ſucceeds the Loſs of Health; the old Parents are uneaſy, and fatigue at all about them: and Now is the Time for Children to

return

return all that Tenderness and Patience to their Parents' Infirmity, without Sourness or Reproof, which their Parents had long lent them in all their childish Perverseness, at an Age when they were not capable of being corrected. Again,

Old Parents grow troublesomely talkative, and, (as Youth is too apt to think,) impertinent; and dwell forever upon the Observations and Adventures of their Times, and their earlier Years. Remember, you also had your Time of being talkative and impertinent, and your Parents bore with you; but, with this Difference, you asked them silly and trifling Questions, and they now tell you wise and useful Observations. But they are troublesome, because they tell them too often. The Answer to this is very obvious: if your Parents bore with your Folly, you may well bear their Wisdom: and although, perhaps, they talk more than is necessary to inform you of present things, yet their Conversation turns mostly upon things past, many Years before you came into the World, and, consequently, such as they must know much better than you; or, though they should talk more than is necessary to inform you, they do not talk more than is necessary to inform your Servants, or your Children, who are now come to an Age of asking many Questions; and, therefore, Providence hath well appointed, that their

Grandfires are now in a Humour to anſwer them all, and to ſupply them with a Store of uſeful Obſervations which they want; nay, which they want to hear again and again; which they want to have inculcated frequently; and which without this Aſſiſtance, would require a Courſe of Years to acquire for themſelves.

So that this Humour of Talkativeneſs, which is commonly thought ſo troubleſome in the Aged, hath its Uſe, and is moſt excellently appointed by God. But, ſay it were not, the Children, in bearing with it, do but barely return their Parents what they long ſince owed them. — Again,

The Strength of the old Parents fails them, and they cannot walk without a Support: but, ſure, you will not let them want one! How many Years did they lead you where you would be, and ſaved you from falling, and from Danger! And will you now ſuffer them to totter and fall to the Earth, who ſo often ſupported and ſaved you when you were weak and tender, and unable to ſupport and ſave yourſelves? Certainly you will not; you cannot at once be guilty of ſo much Cruelty and Ingratitude. And laſtly,

The Underſtandings of the old Parents begin to fail, and the Strength of their Minds doth not long outlive the Strength of their Bodies; but decays gradually, till they become again Children; and they are once more

Infants

Infants in their Age; and are now confined to their Beds, as they were at first to their Cradles. This is the last Stage of Life, and here they demand all that Care, and Compassion, and Tenderness, at your Hand, when they are just going out of the World, which you called for at theirs, when you first came into it.

To this Moment Children will look forward with painful Anxiety, its Approach they will dread, and use every Means in their Power to protract it to the utmost Length. And when it does arrive, they will meet it with Tears of genuine Sorrow and Regret. And! How pleasing the Sight to see dutiful and affectionate Children, after having cheerfully devoted the Strength of Youth to the Service of their Parents, surrounding their dying Beds with unfeigned Grief, following their dear Remains to the Grave with the most passionate Lamentations, and recording in their faithful Memory the Debt of Gratitude they owe to parental Care and Love!

Thus is the Course of Nature fulfilled, and the Circle of God's Providence completed. And what Child, that had the least Remains of Gratitude or Goodness, would not be delighted to pay off this great Debt of Nature, to pursue this Round of filial Duty, in a conscientious Discharge of all the good Offices they owe to their aged Parents? Nay, what Child, that had any

Goodneſs, would not regard this Retribution as his greateſt Honour and Happineſs? What Child, that had any Goodneſs, would wiſh to live longer in this World, than whilſt God inclined his Heart to this delightful and glorious Branch of his Duty? For, ſurely, it is in this Reſpect, more than in any other whatſoever, that Solomon's Obſervation is verified, when he tells us, that "Fathers are the Glory of their Children."

And here we ſee, in Part, the Reaſon of the Reward "of long Life" promiſed in the Text to dutiful Children: for, as nothing ſo naturally ſhortens the Lives of Parents, as the Miſery and Diſtreſs brought upon them by the Diſobedience and Impiety of their Children; and, on other Hand, nothing ſo greatly contributes to the Peace and Happineſs of Parents, and, of Conſequence, to their Health and Life, as the Obedience and Piety of their Iſſue; (*) nothing can be a more ſuitable Reward of that Piety than Length of Life: and ſurely the Bleſſing of long Life, annexed to the Duty of honouring the Father and Mother, is no-where ſo complete, is no-where ſo perfect a Bleſſing, as when the Child hath the Happineſs to pay off the great Debt of Gratitude to his aged Parents, to return ſome Part of what he owes to them, for Support and Correction, for Affection and Tenderneſs, for Example and Inſtruction! and, in a Word, for all the

(*) See Note (*) Page 252. Bleſſings

Bleſſings of a religious and virtuous Education. A Debt for ever to be paid, but never to be diſcharged!

Nay, although a Parent were faulty, and failed in any or all theſe Inſtances, yet ſtill Humanity calls upon us to compaſſionate their Infirmities; and Generoſity ſhould prompt us to upbraid them with our Goodneſs, and to pay where we did not owe. (*)

Upon the Whole, — To be ſupported when we are unable to ſupport ourſelves, to be defended from the World at a Time when we have no Power to contend with it, to receive not only preſent Maintenance, but to have our future Joy and Happineſs provided for, are ſurely Benefits which call for the higheſt and ſincereſt Acknowledgements. But the true Value of this Bleſſing like moſt others, is, perhaps, ſcarce ever perceived till it is loſt; whilſt we revel at the Feaſt, we forget the Maſter of it, and ſeldom know the true Merit of Paternal Affection, till we feel the Want of it.

Look

(*) The *Chineſe* are ſaid to be a People remarkable for filial Piety; the following is a ſtriking Inſtance of it. "A Mandarin being condemned to Death for a Crime committed by him in his Office, his Son, a Child only of fifteen Years, beſought the Emperor that he might ſuffer in his Stead. The Emperor, moved with this uncommon Inſtance of filial Affection, gave the Father his Life; and alſo offered Tokens of Honour on the Son: but the Son declined them, ſaying, 'He would not accept any Diſtinction which ſhould recal to him the Idea of a guilty Father.'" Sarm. CCCLXXXII.

Look round upon the ignorant and illiterate, the poor and deſtitute, the vicious and abandoned, Part of Mankind, enquire into the Cauſes of this Depravity, the Source of their Indigence, and the Reaſons of their Ignorance, and you will moſt generally find that theſe unhappy Wretches are Orphans; ſuch as had no Parents to inſtruct or provide for them, a wandering Flock who had no Guide to direct them.

Let the Reflection on their unhappy Circumſtances ſink deep into the Souls of thoſe who have eſcaped them; let us view the Storm at a Diſtance, and bleſs the Pilot who ſaved us from it; — let us be truly thankful for the Benefit, and by repaying, ſhew that we deſerve it. — But laſtly,

The Laſt Method, I ſhall mention, of HONOURING our Parents (and which is due to them thro the whole Courſe of our Lives, and may reflect upon them after their Deaths) is, to have ſuch a Regard to our own Character and Reputation in the World, as never, if poſſible, to be guilty of any Action which may reflect Grief, Shame and Diſgrace upon them. (*)

"A wiſe Son maketh a glad Father." Virtue is, indeed, always perfectly reaſonable; yet it is moſt amiable in Youth. It is ever, and in every One, the Ob-

(*) See this Character already ſpoken of, Parents, Page 190, &c. the Return is but equal, and its Neceſſity as binding.

Object of our Approbation; but THEN eſpecially of our Love.

Decency in Men of Years is no more than what we look for — The Payment, as it were, of a Debt: We demand it in Return, perhaps, for that Veneration and Reſpect which is given to Age, and as the natural Conſequence of the Wiſdom taught by Time. — But,

When we behold in Youth, the ſame Degree of Regularity and Piety, which we are wont to expect only from the Aged. When we ſee One, who is, comparatively, but a Child, grown up to ſuch a Height of devout Reverence for the ſupreme Being, ſuch prudent Government of himſelf, and exact Attention to all the Rights and Demands of other Men, as are moſtly the Product (when they are produced at all) of long Experience, and the Labour of Years; his excellent Accompliſhments are the more admirable for being leſs looked for; and the natural Gracefulneſs of Youth adds ſomething of its own Beauty, and reflects a Luſtre upon every Virtue, with which itſelf is adorned. — Many there are, whoſe Experience hath fully informed them, of the infinite, unſpeakable Concern of Parents, for the Well-being of their Children, and their much more unſpeakable Sorrow and Affliction for their Miſcarriage. I have ſeen ſuch Joy riſing in the Eyes of a happy Parent, upon the receiving a glad Account of

his Son's Conduct, as hath infused new Transport into my own Heart; and, on the other Hand, I have seen such distracted Looks, such fixed Distress, such Tears of Anguish, from the Eyes of unhappy Parents, as have pierced my Heart. If your Parent's Grief make this Impression upon the Breasts of Strangers, can you be insensible of it? Is there in Nature a greater Instance of Cruelty, than to give Calamity and Affliction where we owe Joy and Transport, and where we could pay it with double Happiness to ourselves? Was ever any Instance of Barbarity devised like that of making those inexpressibly miserable, who have made it the Business of their Lives to make us eternally happy? Remember the Blessing of long Life promised by God to your Obedience, and assure yourselves, that Blessing, well used, will end in the Blessing of Life everlasting. On the other hand, remember the dreadful Imprecations pronounced upon the Neglect, and Impiety, and Disobedience to Parents. Remember whose Eye it is that the Ravens of the Valley shall eat, and whose Light it is that shall be put out in obscure Darkness; even his, "that curseth his Father or his Mother;" "that mocketh at his Father, and despiseth to obey his Mother." Nor are these Curses due only to him that insults and abuses his Parents, but also to him that slights and neglects them. "Cursed is he that setteth light

light by his Father or Mother; – and all the People shall say, Amen." But if all this cannot move you, if you have no Compassion for your own immortal Souls, have some Pity upon your afflicted and aged Parents.

Murder is, in every Instance, and under the most alleviating Circumstances of Passion and Provocation, a most heinous and detestable Sin; but, surely, the bringing down a Parent's grey Hairs with Sorrow to the Grave, is Murder in its dreadfullest Shape! I have often pitied the Condition of Executioners, who were forced, from the Misery of their Circumstances, to inflict the necessary Severities of the Law upon the basest of Mankind. I should die to think of punishing my own Parent, although he were a Malefactor; but to punish an innocent and a good Man, my tender Parent, and my best Friend; and that too with such Anguish as is not in the Power of Tyranny – O God! deliver all that fear thee from so exquisite a Calamity!

If any One has been guilty of this Sin, make haste to repent of it; for, surely, Judgment is gone out against it; and nothing less than a thorough Repentance, the Repentance of our whole Lives, can arrest the Vengeance due to it. If any of you are in a Course of Vice or Idleness, or in any Purpose of Disobedience or Displeasure to your Parents, let this single Consideration stop you short. Will you indulge your own idle

Purpoſes, or vicious Pleaſures, or obſtinate Perverſeneſs, at the Expence of your Parents' Happineſs? Will you live idle and wanton, to make them labour under Affliction and Sorrow all their Days? Will you add Murder to Iniquity? If Vice were attended with no other Evil; if neither Poverty, nor Diſeaſe, nor Infamy waited upon it; if there were no ſuch thing as a Heaven or Hell hereafter; if neither Death nor Damnation purſued it; the ſingle Conſideration of Miſery to your diſtreſſed, afflicted Parents, ſhould make you dread it in every Inſtance, and ſhun it in every Shape.

Hardly, indeed, does a late Penitent give us, or himſelf, any good Proof of the Sincerity of his Repentance, and a true hearty Attatchment to the Cauſe he has, at laſt, choſen. May we not ſurmiſe it poſſible, that no Deſire of leading a holy Life, but the viſible Approach of Death; not any Love of God or Goodneſs, but the Fear of impending Torments, has rouſed him, for a Moment, from his Lethergy, and awakened him to ſome little tranſient Senſe of his Condition? And that, were the Apprehenſions of Danger removed, and his Proſpect of Life lengthened, he would return with Greedineſs to the Iniquities of his Youth, and lay aſide his Thoughts of Religion and the Grave together. (*) Far

(*) See the Diſcourſes on Death-bed Repentance, Vol. xviii. Page 461, &c.

Far be it from a Preacher of the Gospel to teach, that any Sinner, who comes to God with Repentance and Faith, can be rejected. But, Habits of Evil, by Length of Time rooted deeply in our Frame, are not to be torn from us without so many Struggles, and so much Pain and Trouble, as few, or none, upon the Trial, find themselves willing to endure. — And,

What Spectacle more melancholy, than that of an old Sinner, at last, smitten with Remorse? Beginning to be sensible of the Deformity and Danger of the Course he is in; yet unable, almost, and not quite willing, to forsake it? — How hard is Repentance; but Death is dreadful — "Forgive," he tries to say, and holds up his shaking Hands towards Heaven. "To be forgiven," I must repent. To repent, is to offend no more - to repair all Wrongs — restore unfair Gains and, by so doing perhaps, be brought to Want — and exposed, perhaps, to Infamy.

Alas! Who that has done Evil long, can at last repent worthily? — How easy to be innocent! impossible to become so! And how terrible is Judgment!

Who can envy a dying Sinner these Meditations; but must greatly pity him? Yet, with these fruitless Wishes, ineffectual Efforts, distracted Apprehensions, many pass into Eternity, who might once have been eminent Saints, with but a Part of that Self-denial,

which now only disturbs them in their Sins, and avails nothing to their Salvation.

These are the great Arguments for an early Piety, and they are sufficient surely to recommend it to the Choice of every Young Person, who will reflect upon them as he ought.

There is still remaining another Motive besides these, which, tho comparatively small, may have some Weight, if they have not indeed cast off all the Fear of God, and lost also with it all the Sentiments and Feelings of Men; but remain still open to the Impressions of Humanity and Compassion.

How happy for both Parties! If some Youth, careless (I confess) but, perhaps not cruel, could be induced to do Good to himself for another's Sake, and enter immediately on a sober and pious Life, that his Parents might have Comfort of him! — Indeed,

We are willing to think that many of those young People, whose Behaviour is so blameable, are not sensible of the Uneasiness it occasions, nor at all aware, how much Anguish is indured on their Account. They run heedlessly forward, in the broad and open Path, and have no Thought, but of the Pleasure they are pursuing.

Yet, stop, Young Man, we intreat you, a little; look towards thy aged Parent. Think it not too much to bestow

beſtow a Moment's Reflection upon thoſe, who never forget thee. Recollect what they have done for thee. Remember all – all, indeed, thou canſt not – alas! ill had been thy Lot, had not their Care of thee begun before thou coudſt remember, or know any thing.

Now ſo proud, ſelf-willed, and inexorable, thou coudſt then only aſk by wailing, and move them with thy Tears – and they were moved. Their Heart was touched with thy Diſtreſs. They watched and relieved thy Wants, before thou kneweſt thine own Neceſſities, or their Kindneſs. They cloathed thee, and thou kneweſt not that thou waſt naked. Thou aſkedſt not for Bread, but they fed thee; and ever ſince, in ſhort, (for the Particulars are too many to be recounted, and too many, ſurely to be forgotten,) it has been the very principal Endeavour, Employment, and Study of their Lives to do Service to thee. "How then canſt thou recompenſe them the things they have done for thee?" And remember, (for this too is of Moment,) It is all out of pure, undeſigned Affection. Other Friends uſually expect their Civilities to be repaid, and their kind Offices to be returned, with Intereſt. But, Parents have no Thoughts like theſe. "They ſeek not thine, but thee." Their Regard is real, and hearty, and undeſigning. If by all their Endeavours they can obtain their Child's Welfare, they arrive at the full Ac-

compliſhment of their Wiſhes. They have no higher Object of their Ambition. Be thou but happy, and they are ſo.

Is there not, therefore, (may we not aſk) ſomething to be done, we do not ſay for thy ſelf, but for them, in Return? – If it be too much to deſire of thee to be good, and wiſe, and virtuous, and happy for thine own Sake, – yet, be happy for their's. Think that a ſober, upright, and, let me add, religious Life, beſides the Bleſſings it will bring upon thine own Head, will be a Fountain of unfailing Comfort to thy declining Parents, and make the Heart of the Aged ſing for Joy; whoſe Years have been prolonged, not as it often happens, to ſee his Comforts fall from him, one after another, and to become, at once, old and deſtitute; but to taſte a new Pleaſure, not to be found among the Pleaſures of Youth, reſerved for his Age, to reap the Harveſt of all his Cares and Labour in the Duty, Affection, and Felicity of his dear Child. His very Look beſpeaks the inward Satisfaction of his Heart. The Infirmities of his Age ſit light on him. He feels not the Troubles of Life. He ſmiles at the Approach of Death. Sees himſelf ſtill living and honoured, in the Memory and Perſon of his Son, his other, dearer Self; and ſo paſſes down to the Receptacle of all Fleſh, in the Fulneſs of Contens and Joy.

But

But alas! How unlike to this is the Condition of him, who has the Affliction to be the Father of a wicked Offspring! (*) Poor, unhappy Man! no Sorrow is like unto thy Sorrow. Diseases and Death are Bleſſings compared with the Anguiſh of thy Heart – when thou ſeeſt thy deareſt Children run heedleſsly headlong in the Ways of Sin, forgetful of their Parents' Counſel, and their own Happineſs—no Reflection is able to afford him Conſolation. He grows old betimes, and the Afflictions of Age are doubled upon his Head. For the Conſequences of Vice are ſeldom, indeed, confined to the Perſon of the Offender, they reach much further, and affect others as well as himſelf. The Malice and Ill-nature of Mankind is always too ready to attribute the Follies of Children to the Negligence or Example of their Parents.

What ſhall we ſay, then, to thoſe, who inſtead of imparting Joy and Satisfaction to the virtuous Parent, repay their Cares and Tenderneſs with Ignominy and Diſgrace; who, inſtead of adding Dignity to their Age, and Weight to their Authority, by a licentious, wicked and abandoned Life, load their Hearts with Sorrow, increaſe the Burden of their Years, and bring down their gray

(*) How ſimple then a Serpent's Tooth is it to have a thankleſs Child?

gray Hairs with Sorrow to the Grave? (*) Let such seriously consider, what an unnatural Sin they are guilty of; and since they cannot beg Pardon of their Parents, let them ask it of God, the great and universal Father of all; and beseech Him, not to revenge their Disobedience, by the perverse Undutifulness of their own Children.

One thing more to be observed on this Subject, is, that all the Duties of Children, already mentioned, belong equally to both Parents; the Mother being as expressly named, as the Father, in the Commandment, and the Text. Which shews that Parental Authority is not confined to the Father only. Be the Paternal Rights what they may, there are Maternal Rights also; and these draw after them Duties and Respects from the Children to the Mother, as well as the former to the Father. And it is further to be observed, that Obedience and Reverence are due, not to immediate Parents only, but to their Parents also, (i.e) to all in the ascending Line; they having, in Point of Reason, a proportioned Right to all the Privileges of their Age, and Honours of their Kindred or Alliance. (†)

(*) The Joys of Parents are secret, so are their Griefs and Fears; they cannot bear the One, but will they express the Other. Child. dear sweeten Labour, but they make Misfortunes more bitter. "A wise Son maketh a glad Father, but a foolish Son is the Heaviness of his Mother."

(†) See Page 352, with the Note.

Sermon

SERMON CCCLXXXIII.

On the same Subject.

Motives to it.

Ephe. vi. 1, 2, 3. "Children, obey your Parents in "the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy Father "and Mother; (which is the first Commandment "with Promise) that it may be well with thee, and "thou mayest live long on the Earth."

The Considerations to enforce the Duty of Children, (already considered) are many and important. we shall class them under the following Heads, as enforced upon us by the Law of Nature — the express Command of God — and the Examples of Persons eminent for their Virtue and Piety. And how happy will it be, if these Reasonings, accompanied with a divine Energy, produce the desired Effect! — And,

First, From the Law of Nature.

After an entire and boundless Obedience and Veneration due from all to God, the next Degree of Respect and Reverence, (according to the Commandment, and consentaneous to Nature,) is That due from Children to their Parents. The

The Relation, indeed, between the Creator, and his Creatures, admits in Strictness, of no Comparison; yet when he is pleased to represent himself to us under Notions accommodated to our Capacity, there is not any Character he assumes more frequently or willingly than this of a Parent. No Resemblance can exactly set before us his Nature or Operations, what he is in himself, or what he is to us; but this we may presume, has in it the least Impropriety. He not only condescends to take the Title, but claims, and, as it were, glories in it; calling, at the same Time, for all those Sentiments and Returns from us, which are suitable to that Relation. (*)

What great Respect, then, must be due from us to that Character, which the Supreme Nature has chosen to be the Representation of his own. The Authority of a Father can be seen in no fairer View than by this reflected Light. When we look on the parental Power, we behold the Image of the Divine. — Not that we are obliged to have Recourse to Metaphors and oblique Arguments on this Subject, for even Nature dictates it; the Duty of Children towards their Parents being bound upon them by the most immediate & obvious, as well as the most powerful & indispensible Obligations. Children, obey your Parents in the Lord; for this is RIGHT."

(*) Mal. i. 6. 2 Cor. viii. 6. Eph. iv. 6. Heb. xii. 9.
See the Discourse on this Subject, Vol. ii. Page 100, &c.

RIGHT." It is just, fit and reasonable in itself, what the Light of Nature teaches, and all Nations and Ages have acknowledged to be expedient. Accordingly,

Among the earliest Objects of a Child's Attention, are his Parents. He becomes soonest acquainted with them, reposes a peculiar Confidence in them, and seems to regard them with a fond Affection, the earliest Prognosticks of his future Piety and Gratitude.

This Law operates two Ways, by Instinct, and by Reason. Instinct is a strong Bias to Actions, which produces its Effect without any previous Reasoning or Consideration. It is common to Men and Brutes, and cannot be counteracted without a violent Force put on Nature. Of this Kind, (as we have observed before, *) is that excessive Fondness which Parents, particularly Mothers, feel for their Offspring. And of this Kind too, is that Regard which Children feel for their Parents, especially in the earlier Part of Life. During that Period, it supplies the Place of Reason, and urges them to that Reverence and Obedience, which they afterwards come clearly to perceive is their Duty.

Thus does Nature dictate the first Lines of filial Duty, even before a just Sense of the Connection is formed. From this Principle, therefore, (the Force of which all

(*) Page 199. Serm. CCCLXXXIII.

all Children feel,) we may be allowed to argue with them, as they are advancing to Years of Discretion.

Let Children, therefore, call their Eyes back to the earliest Moments they can recollect, and call-to-mind the Eagerness and Attention with which they looked up to their Parents for Support and Protection, and the Reverence, Submission, and Obedience which this Attachment to them drew after it: and then say whether they can avoid inferring from thence, now they are capable of reasoning, their Obligation to the Duties we have been recommending. It is the Voice of Nature; and will they, can they eradicate from their Breasts a Propensity that is coeval with their Existence? If they could, what would be the Effect, but to sink them beneath the Level of the Brute Creation?

But as Reason exalts us above inferior Animals, so it enables us to perceive what are the Grounds upon which the Law of Nature stands. And if we can clearly make it appear, that Equity, Gratitude, and Interest require a dutiful Compliance with these Duties, it will follow, that whoever withholds such Compliance, stands chargeable with complicated Guilt and shameful Absurdity. And,

I. The Law of Equity demands filial Obedience.

It is a Truth acknowledged on all Hands, that Respect and Submission are due from Inferiors to their Su-

Superiors. The Authority which the latter acquire over the former is founded in Age, Wisdom, Experience, Property, Benefits conferred, and the Consent of the Community: and these Obligations, saving the just Rights of Conscience, are not to be disputed without manifest Injustice. Now,

Upon this Ground how equitable are the Claims of Parents upon their Children! They have the Advantage of Age, Experience, and Property; to which must be added the Consideration of their having done more for their Children than any others could possibly do for them, that of being, under God, the Instruments of their Existence.

Should it be objected, that "Parents have done no more for their Children than natural Affection obliged them to do." It is replied, That is not in every Instance true, and if it were, it does not in Justice vacate their Claim of Obedience. But the best Reply to such unnatural Disingenuity, is, "Let those Children, who object this to their Parents, tell us how they would like such Treatment themselves." (*)

Indeed, the common Sense and Feelings of Mankind reprobate such Language. All wise and good Men are agreed in the Reasonableness of filial Obedience,

(*) It is the Advice of Isocrates, "Act towards your Parents in such a Manner, as you would wish your own Children to act towards yourself."

ence, and nothing but the most settled Depravity can extort from the human Breast an Objection to it.

But adly, To the Demands of Justice we add those of Gratitude. — And here,

If there be any the least ingenuous Sentiment in the human Breast, we have Opportunity of addressing it by Motives that are irresistible.

When Children are grown up, and have attained to such a Degree of Understanding, as to comprehend the moral Tie, and are sensible of the Obligation they are under to their Parents; when they look back to the first Moment of their Existence, and realize the innumerable Expressions of parental Affection, their incessant Care and Labours in providing for them during that State in which they had neither Prudence nor Strength to care and provide for themselves, they must be conscious that they owe their Parents every Duty of Honour, Respect and Obedience, with all others flowing from them, and which they can in any Way import. Shall Inattention and Neglect on your Part draw Tears of Sadness from those Eyes, which have so often looked on you with Tenderness and Pity? Shall harsh and disrespectful Language grate on those Ears, which have been ever open to commiserate your Cries? Shall unnatural Disobedience pierce the Bosom that has so passionately loved you? Shall sullen Ingra-

titude

titude crush the Heart that was devoted to you? And Folly & Sin, bring down those grey Hairs with Sorrow to the Grave, which Affection for you, as well as Old age, hath rendered truly venerable? – God forbid! On the contrary, does not every ingenuous Sentiment, and every pious Feeling of the Heart, call loudly on you to exert your utmost Efforts towards discharging a Debt, which, after all, it will never be in your Power to repay? Ought you not to revere their Persons, and hold their Characters sacred? Ought you not to approach them with Respect, and to kindle into a Flame at every Insult offered them? Ought not their Commands to be a Law with you, and every Deviation from them a Force put upon your Nature? Ought you not religiously to regard their Admonitions, and patiently submit to their Censures? Ought you not to consult their Happiness in every Step you take, and accommodate yourselves even to their Humours? Ought you not, when they are in the Decline of Life, to afford them all the Assistance in your Power? – to watch their Looks with Assiduity and Attention – to bear their Pains with them – to sooth their ruffled Passions – support their feeble Steps – make their Bed in their Sickness – and, if you cannot hold back Death from them, yet by your Sympathy and Prayers disarm him at least of some of his Terrors? Gratitude for a

thousand kind Offices you have received, demand all this at your Hands. It is most decent and becoming to obey and reverence those, to whom under God we are indebted for our Existence. It is on the Grounds of Equity and Gratitude most naturally to be expected, that we should make every Return in our Power to those who have shewn us all imaginable Care and Kindness.

Again, 3dly, Interest holds the same Language. To resist Instinct, to oppose Reason, to deny the Claims of Justice, and to elude the Intreaties of Gratitude, one should suppose must be a painful Business. Yet the momentary Pleasure resulting from the Gratification of depraved Passions, does in some Instances get the better of all these Considerations; Shame however and Remorse must be the Consequence. On the contrary, a ready Compliance with the Dictates of Nature and Reason seldom fails to afford Pleasure: or, if some Sacrifice must be made of present Ease and Pleasure, yet the solid Advantages that result thence are more than an Equivalent. Such is the Case here.

When Frowardness in early Life prevails over Parental Authority, Children are themselves the Sufferers as well as their Parents, and indeed in a greater Degree than they. They not only lose all the real Benefits which would result to them from Submission, but a Foundation is laid for Miseries of the most fatal Kind in

in this World and in another. Not to ſpeak of the abſolute Neceſſity of Submiſſion, in Order to their preſent Support and Protection; how great is its Importance, in Order to their eſcaping future Evils, and in Order to the forming them for the Duties and Pleaſures of mature Age! Children, accuſtomed to violate the Laws of filial Obedience, ſeldom, when grown up, make good Members of Society. (*) Impatient, ſelf-willed, proud, fierce, and void of natural Affection, they are a Diſgrace to their Species, ſhuned of all good Men, and abandoned to Contempt and Miſery. While they who obediently ſubmit to the Yoke Nature kindly impoſes, are hereby fitted for Honour, and Proſperity, and all the ſocial Enjoyments of Life.

Here let us conſider, a little more attentively, the Influence which a dutiful Deportment towards their Parents hath upon the Reputation, Fortune, Comfort, and, with the Bleſſing of God, upon the final Happineſs of Youth.

What young Perſon of a liberal Mind, but would be glad to be on a reſpectable Footing, in the Circle of a virtuous Acquaintance! And what is there that tends ſo directly to ſecure to him this Felicity, as the Character of being a dutiful Son? In this Idea are comprehended all the ſocial and friendly Virtues. Thus deſcribed,

(*) See the Note, Page 309.

ſcribed, he is underſtood to be juſt, humane, and benevolent; and ſo is reſpected, confided in, and beloved; has an eaſy Admiſſion to the Acquaintance of Men of Character, and a natural Introduction to Buſineſs. Religiouſly regarding the Admonitions and Cautions of prudent and affectionate Parents, he eſcapes a thouſand Evils into which Conceit, Perverſeneſs and ill Education precipitate Multitudes around him; and paying a due Attention to their Maxims and Counſels, for they are far better able on many Accounts to direct and govern him, eſpecially in his Minority, than he is himſelf, he acquires a thouſand Enjoyments which he would otherwiſe loſe. Led by the ſkilful Hand of Age and Experience, faithfully and cordially held-forth to his Aſſiſtance, he is guided ſafely thro the dangerous Path of Youth and Temptation, to the fair Eminence of Reputation, Happineſs, and Uſe. How many have gratefully acknowledged themſelves indebted, under Providence, to parental Wiſdom, for the extraordinary Succeſs they have met-with in worldly Buſineſs, the diſtinguiſhed Situations in Life to which they have attained, and the Reputation in which they have been held by all around them! Had it been their Unhappineſs, as it has of too many young People, to turn with Diſguſt from the ſage Advice of their Fathers, to truſt to their own Underſtandings, and to fall in with the

the flattering Counſels of youthful Companions, the Reverſe would have been their Fortune, and they ſunk in Diſgrace, Miſery, and Oblivion. But,

Beſides the Conſiderations of the many Advantages which reſult directly, and in the natural Courſe of things, from a dutiful Attention to the Inſtructions of virtuous and prudent Parents, it is to be remembered that ſuch Conduct is pleaſing to God, and uſually followed with the Smiles of Providence. But of this we ſhall ſpeak more largely hereafter.

The Pleaſure, too, which an ingenuous Mind muſt feel, in the Idea of making Parents happy, by rendering them that Reverence, Obedience, and Support, which is their juſt Due, clearly ſhews it to be the Intereſt of Children ſo to do. Benevolence is its own Reward: and if this is true in Regard of Offices of Kindneſs in general, with how much greater Force may this Sentiment be applied to the Matter before us! Where Juſtice, Gratitude, Affection, and Inſtinct all unite to perſuade us to make others happy, what Pain muſt it give us to reſiſt! What Pleaſure to comply! Can I then ſee a Parent, to whom I owe innumerable Obligations, unhappy, and not be myſelf unhappy? eſpecially if I have Ground to apprehend, that a Jealouſy of my being deficient in Point of Tenderneſs, is the Cauſe of it? On the contrary, what refined Satisfac-

tion, muſt I feel from contributing the utmoſt in my Power, to their Repoſe and their Comfort, eſpecially in the cloſing Scene of Life! Every ſuch Exertion, though painful in itſelf, muſt be pleaſant in the Reflection. O the Joy! to ſmooth the brow of parental Adverſity, to aſſiſt the Infirmities of declining Nature, to dry the falling Tear, lift up the feeble Hand, convert Languor into Smiles, and make the dying Bed of Old-age eaſy!

Add to this, the comfortable Hope of our receiving again from the Hands of our own Children the like Returns of Gratitude and Affection: for, we muſt pay that Duty as Children, which as Parents, we may hereafter expect to receive. "By the ſame that a Man ſinneth, (ſaith the Wiſe Man) by the ſame ſhall he be puniſhed." The undutiful Child will moſt probably be an unhappy Father, the poiſoned Cup may return to his own Lips, and he may meet with that Diſobedience from his Children which he had himſelf been guilty of, and want that Duty and Reſpect which he refuſed himſelf to pay. (*) But, The

(*) As undutiful Children are themſelves without any good Principle, it is not to be ſuppoſed that they will teach their Children that which is good; accordingly, it is a natural, certain, and infallible Obſervation, that the Son, who hath irreverently and diſobediently diſhonoured his Father, is, in his Old Age, plagued by his own Poſterity.

The moſt important Conſideration of all is, the Influence which filial Obedience hath upon the religious Character of Children, and, of Conſequence, on their nobleſt Intereſts here and hereafter. If our Parents fear God, our final Salvation is their grand Object. With a View to this, they teach, counſel, reſtrain, and correct us; weep over us, expoſtulate with us, and pray inceſſantly for us. Now what are we doing, when we turn a deaf Ear to all they ſay, but depriving ourſelves of the greateſt Advantages, and laying violent Hands on our immortal Souls? A religious Education is a ſingular Bleſſing. Happy they who improve it! How many perverſe undutiful Children have lamented their Abuſe of it, with the ſharpeſt Accents, upon their dying Beds! And how many of the contrary Character, whoſe dutiful Carriage has furniſhed one among many other Proofs of their Piety, have acknowledged this great Benefit with their lateſt Breath, thanking God that they were not left to the Folly and Madneſs of treating parental Counſel and Authority with Contempt. But,

Moſt of all, Our Kindneſs to our Parents will ſtand us in great Stead, when God calls us to Account for our Forgetfulneſs of Him. "Whoſo honoureth his Father, maketh an Atonement for Sin: and he that honoureth his Mother, is as One that layeth up

Treaſure: Thy Sins alſo ſhall melt away as the Ice in the fair warm Weather."

From the Laws of Nature, thus laid down, both in Inſtinct and Reaſon, we proceed,

Secondly, To the Commands of Scripture.

"Honour thy Father and thy Mother," was one of thoſe Precepts of the Moral Law, which God himſelf ſo ſolemnly pronounced on Mount Sinai, and which He writ with his own Finger on the Tables of Stone, and it is his Pleaſure that that Voice ſhould be heard 'thro' all the World, to the End of Time. For Children, therefore, to "obey their Parents in the Lord," is to obey the Authority of God.

This Precept is the next in Order to thoſe which reſpect our Duty to God, and takes the Precedence of all the other Duties required of us towards our Neighbour. It is put in immediate Connection with Divine Worſhip: "Ye ſhall fear every Man his Father, and Mother, and keep my Sabbaths: I am the Lord."

And indeed, it is not imaginable, that ſuch Children as are not diſpoſed to honour their Parents, can be in a Diſpoſition to worſhip God. (*) The

(*) The whole Body of the Athenian Laws, in the early State of that People, was compriſed in one Line, "Honour your Parents; "Worſhip the Gods; Hurt not Animals." And Plutarch ſays "There is not a greater Evidence of an Atheiſt than in a Man's deſpiſing and injuring his Parents." See the Note, Page 309.

The moſt tremendous Judgments are denounced on thoſe who violate this Law. Under the Jewiſh Oeconomy, he that curſed his Father or his Mother, was to be put to Death. (*) And the ſtubborn, diſobedient, and rebellious Son, having been convicted of theſe Offences before the Elders of his City, was to be ſtoned with Stones that he die. (‡) Among the Curſes to be pronounced on mount Gerizim, this was one; "Curſed be he that ſetteth light by his Father or his Mother: and all the People ſhall ſay, Amen." Solomon, in the Book of Proverbs, holds the ſame Language. "Whoſo curſeth his Father or his Mother, his Lamp ſhall be put out in obſcure Darkneſs. Whoſo robbeth his Father or his Mother, and ſaith, it is no Tranſgreſſion; the ſame is the Companion of a Deſtroyer."

(*) Exod. xxi. 17. Lev. xx. 9.

(‡) I have often admired it as a glorious Inſtance of Diſcipline in the Jewiſh Common-wealth, that an undutiful Child was to be ſtoned to Death by the People: that ſo every One ſhould be obliged to puniſh a Crime which every One was obliged to abhor. But then it muſt be obſerved, that the Parents had no Right to bring the Child before the Magiſtrate, in Order to his public Condemnation, before they had firſt privately chaſtiſed him: for this was the Letter of the Law, (Deut. xxi. 18.) then it was that he was to be brought before the Magiſtrate, accuſed, condemned, and ſtoned to Death: ſo that private Chaſtiſement was always to go before that public, that infamous, and dreadful Execution.

er." And again, "The Eye that mocketh at his Father, and deſpiſeth to obey his Mother, the Ravens of the Valley ſhall pick it out, and the young Eagles ſhall eat it." (*) The Prophet Ezekiel exhibits this, among many other heavy Charges, againſt the Jews, "that they ſet-light by Father and Mother;" and threatens them with very ſore Calamities on Account of it. And with theſe remarkable Words the Canon of the Old Teſtament Scriptures is cloſed, "Behold, I will ſend you Elijah the Prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful Day of the Lord. And he ſhall turn the Heart of the Fathers to the Children, and the Heart of the Children to their Fathers, leſt I come, and ſmite the Earth with a Curſe."

What the Moral Law, by the Lips of Moſes and the Prophets, thus enjoins, the New Teſtament confirms. Our Lord has ſhewn great Reſpect to this Commandment, not only by obſerving it, being himſelf ſub-

(*) This is often literally true in the calamitous End of abandoned Children, whoſe Carcaſes are, in the Field of Battle, whither their Diſobedience carried them, expoſed to Ravens and Vultures; or elſe upon Gibbets, to which their Villanies have brought them; Villanies committed in Contempt of the Monitions & Exhortations of their Parents! the ſame ſad Fate is alſo frequently fulfilled upon undutiful Children, in a metaphorical Senſe, in the deplorable Ruin, and direful Loſs of Eyes, brought upon ſuch Wretches, by other Creatures of much greater Prey and ſurer Deſtruction; the Profligate and Wicked of the World.

ſubject to his Parents, but alſo by reſtoring it, when it was degraded, to its proper Rank, and declaring it to be indiſpenſible. (*) — And,

As he thus eſtabliſhes the Authority of the divine Command, ſo he makes that Affection which Nature hath implanted in the Breaſts of Children to their Parents, and on which the Duties of filial Obedience are grounded, a Meaſure by which every Diſciple of his is to eſtimate the Genuineneſs and Tranſcendency of his Love to him; "He that loveth Father or Mother more than me, is not worthy of Me." The Apoſtles, too, particularly enjoin this Precept on Children. "Obey your Parents, in all things, for this is well-pleaſing unto the Lord." "If any Widow have Children or Nephews, let them learn firſt to ſhew Piety at Home, and to requite their Parents; for that is good and acceptable before God." And among the many ſtriking Characters by which the Degeneracy of the laſt Times is ſtrongly marked, thoſe of "Diſobedience to Parents," and "the Want of natural Affection," are not the leaſt.

But without citing any further Authorities from Scripture, we ſhall content ourſelves with recalling your Attention to the Words of the Text. "Children, obey your Parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy Father and Mother (which is the firſt Com-

(*) Matt. xv. 4, 5, 6.

Commandment with Promiſe) that it may be well with thee, and thou mayeſt live long on the Earth." The Law of Nature is the Law of God. Whatever is fit and right, that God requires: Obedience to Parents is fit and right, therefore God requires it. This we ſee, is expreſsly declared in the Text. But more than this, the Apoſtle refers us back to the Decalogue, telling us that that is binding on Gentiles as well as Jews, upon us under the Chriſtian, as well as thoſe under the Moſaic Diſpenſation. It is God's Command now as much as when he ſpoke thoſe Words himſelf on Mount Sinai, "Honour thy Father and Mother." Wilfully therefore, to violate this Law, is to offend againſt the expreſs Authority of God.

Sermon

SERMON CCCLXXXIV.

On the same Subject.
Motives to it, continued.

Ephe. vi. 1, 2, 3. "Children, obey your Parents in "the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy Father, "and Mother, (which is the first Commandment "with Promise) that it may be well with thee, and "thou mayest live long on the Earth."

The Motives by which we have already enforced the Duty before us, were from Inſtinct, Reaſon, and Scripture.

But, In Order yet further to enforce Obedience to this Command, the Apoſtle holds up to our View the Promiſe originally annexed to it. "It is the firſt Commandment with Promiſe," (*) diſtinguiſhed by a particular Mark of the divine Regard, and deſigned to be

(*) The Promiſe added to the ſecond Commandment, (which indeed is rather an Aſſertion than a Promiſe) is no other than a general Declaration of God's merciful Diſpoſition to all who love him and keep his Commandments, and evidently relates to the whole Law. Whereas the Precept of which the Apoſtle is here ſpeaking, is the firſt and only One that hath a Promiſe annexed to it, peculiar

be considered by us as the Ground of all the other Duties we owe to Society. He that wilfully violates this Precept, is in the direct Road to the open Violation of all the Precepts that follow. And indeed, it were easy to shew, both from the Reason & Nature of the thing, and from the History of Mankind, that all those tremendous Evils which shake the Foundations of Civil Society, originate from the Want of natural Affection, and a Failure in filial Obedience. And, on the contrary, it were as easy to shew, that all the social Virtues comprehended in the general Idea of Love to our Neighbour, naturally flow from that first and most important of them, Dutifulness to Parents. There scarce ever was an affectionate obedient Child, who did not make a useful Member of Society.

And how much it is the Will of God, that a universal Attention should be paid to this Precept, may be further argued from the Promise itself of the temporal Blessings annexed to it. "Honour thy Father and Mother,

(*) It should not be omitted, that the Language of this Text establishes the Authority of the Decalogue or moral Law, with Respect to us Christians as well as the Jews, teaching us not only that we should make it the Rule of our Lives, but that we may and ought to be influenced in our Obedience, by a Regard to the Blessings it promises. And in Respect to the Precept before us, the Apostle evidently means by filling it "the first Commandment with Promise," to draw an Argument from thence, to persuade Children to a dutiful Behaviour towards their Parents.

Mother, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayeſt live long on the Earth." — Not, that by long Life is ſtrictly meant the living a great many Years, but the living happily and well: — the Jews themſelves underſtood it no otherwiſe — and ſo St. Paul expreſſes it, "Honour thy Father and Mother, that it may be well with thee," (i.e.) that thou mayeſt live happily, and in God's Favour, that he may bleſs thee with the Bleſſings thou ſhalt moſt ſtand in need of; and, if that be beſt for thee, "that thou mayeſt live long on the Earth."

The long and happy Poſſeſſion of the Land of Canaan was the Reward propoſed to the Jews for the keeping of all God's Commandments (*) — and yet in the ſolemn Delivery of the Law, the Reward is not ſubjoined to the whole, but annexed, in ſeems, to one diſtinguiſhed Precept: — as if Reſpect to this One of the divine Commandments had a ſuperior Efficacy in drawing down that Bleſſing, which, indeed, was only due to the Obſervance of all. — Nor,

Is this Reward without its Weight even to Chriſtians, for Children, that obey their Parents, are the moſt likely to do well, and proſper, to live long, and happily, according to the natural Courſe of things, as being hereby prepared for the right Diſcharge of every Chriſtian Duty. (†) The

(*) Deut. v. 33.

(†) *Fundamentum eſt omnium Virtutum Pietas in Parentes.* Serm. CCCLXXXIV.

The Whole of Life is apt to take its Lead from the Employment of our Youth; and that Employment of it which is the moſt agreeable to our Parents, will, commonly, be moſt to our Advantage.

The plain Import of it, then, is this, that thoſe who, in Obedience to the divine Authority, pay due Reſpect to their Parents, will be likely to enjoy worldly Proſperity and long Life. If we conſider it as a poſitive Promiſe, it was remarkably fulfilled in Regard of the Jews. And even if we underſtand it in a qualified Senſe, (as we certainly ſhould, the State of Chriſtians in Civil Society being different from that of the Jews) it will not be difficult to prove, that God is mindful of his Promiſe now as well as formerly: for, though temporal Rewards and Puniſhments are not now diſpenſed in the Manner they were among that People, who ſubſiſted under a peculiar Form of Government, yet there are not a few Inſtances of dutiful Children, who have been diſtinguiſhed by the Smiles of Providence; and it is true of them all, in Regard of their beſt Intereſts, that acting thus in the Fear of God, it is well with them in this Life, and ſhall be well with them forever in the Life to come. We ourſelves have known Perſons, whoſe tender Regards to their Parents have been tried by very peculiar Circumſtances, and who have acquitted themſelves in a Manner as extra-

ordinary:

ordinary: theſe Perſons we have ſeen emerge from low and obſcure Stations in Life to Situations of Affluence and Eminence, in which they have flouriſhed to a good Old-age. So that it might be ſaid of them, in the ſtricteſt Senſe of the Expreſſion, that it hath been well with them, and that they have lived long on the Earth. But admitting, with Reſpect to many dutiful Children, that an Abundance of Wealth, Honour, and Years, does not fall to their Share; yet if ſo much of this World's Good is allotted them as it is for their real Advantage to have, and if, having been uſeful and happy in Life, they die in Honour and Peace, the Words of the Text may be ſaid, in the general and ſubſtantial Import of them, to be made good to them. And that this is a Fact in Regard of thoſe who obey their Parents in the Lord, (i.e. from a Senſe of Duty to God,) is capable of clear Proof. Such Perſons may be ſtyled pious or godly, and we are aſſured that "Godlineſs hath the Promiſe of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come." — Upon the Whole of this Argument: God, we ſee, doth ſo peculiarly delight in our Execution of this Duty, that he hath promiſed to bleſs us — and, if that be beſt for us, even to ſuſpend for a Time the Laws of Nature in Favour of thoſe who comply with it; as if the Divine Being were himſelf unwilling to interrupt us in the Performance of an

Office ſo acceptable and well pleaſing to him.

Thus doth Religion, (which, in the Language of Holy Writ, is always ſtiled Wiſdom) provide for thoſe who walk in her Ways — "Length of Days, with Riches and Honours." — What need I more,

Nature we ſee inculcates it; the Reward is diſtinguiſhed; the Condemnation, dreadful; and yet equitable; — the Conſcience even of the Tranſgreſſor cannot but approve of it. He that is hard-hearted to him that begat, and to her that bare him, to whom will he be good? — what Crimes will he not, in Time, grow up to commit, who begins with this? and what Puniſhment may he not ſuffer in Conſequence of it.

And, in fact, What Confeſſion is more juſt, or, indeed, more frequent, in thoſe who are brought to an ignominious End, than this, that they began their Courſe of Iniquity at Home, in an obſtinate ungovernable Diſpoſition and Diſobedience to their Parents? The Progreſs, after this, was natural, thro every Vice to that fatal Crime then to be expiated; and yet, perhaps, not expiated even by their Blood, thro every Danger, to this awful Moment, when they find Almighty God faithful, at laſt, in his Threatnings, they are ſnatched away in the midſt, often in the Beginning, of their Days; gathering thus the firſt bitter Fruits of Diſobedience, and looking for the full Vintage hereafter in eternal Torments. — And now,

To

To all those Arguments we have drawn from the Law of Nature, and the expreſs Command of God, I have only to add thoſe which reſult,

Thirdly, From Example. — Here to illuſtrate is to perſuade: to hold up to your View Inſtances of filial Piety, is at once to inſtruct you in your Duty, and to allure you to it. And, Thanks be to God! degenerate as the World is, Hiſtory, both profane and ſacred, furniſhes Examples enough to our Purpoſe. — To begin with thoſe on Prophane Record.

The Character of Pius Æneas, which Virgil ſo repeatedly gives the Hero of his Poem, on Account of his filial Attention and Duty to his Father Anchiſes, cannot fail of giving Pleaſure to a Reader of Senſibility. — Epaminondas, the Theban General, amidſt the flattering Applauſe he received on the Victory he gained over the Spartans at Leuctra, ſaid, "My Joy chiefly conſiſts in knowing, that my Father and Mother will hear of my Victory." — By the Tears of his Mother Veturia the brave Coriolanus was prevailed on to grant Peace to Rome, though at the Hazard of ſuffering the Reſentment of the Volci, whoſe Troops he commanded in the Siege of that City. (Plut. in Coriol.) In the dreadful Proſcription that took place in Rome on the Arrival of the Triumvirs, Octavianus, Anthony, and Lepidus, there was an Oppius, who ſaved his old

and infirm Father, by carrying him on his Shoulders to the Sea-side, and escaping with him into Sicily; for which generous Action he was afterwards raised to the Ædileship, and otherwise munificently rewarded by the Roman People. There was also, on the same Occasion, an Hosidius, who eluded the Search that was to have been made after him by an Artifice which filial Tenderness suggested: the Son spread a Report that his Father had laid violent Hands on himself, and to make the Fact the more credible, spent his Fortune in performing his Obsequies.

There is an Instance of Heathen Piety in this Point, that Christians should blush at. — T. Manlius was ill-treated, and turned out of Doors, by a severe Father, who was soon after called to an Account by the Tribune for this, and some other Part of his Conduct. A Day was appointed for his Trial, and every one concluded his Life was lost. The Son heard of his Danger, and, without saying any thing to any One, went secretly to the Tribune, and inquired about it. The Tribune answered, that what he had heard was Truth; and a principal Part of the Accusation against him was a cruel Treatment which he, his Son, had received from him. Upon this, Manlius puts a Dagger to the Tribune's Breast, and vowed immediate Death to him, if he did not that Moment drop the Prosecution.

on. The Tribune, in Terror of his Life, ſolemnly ſwore he would, and did accordingly; and the next Day reported the whole Truth to the Aſſembly; and the Father was acquitted for the Generoſity of the Son.

How few Sons are there now in the World who would make as generous a Return to the Tenderneſs and Fondneſs of their Fathers, as this Son did to the Cruelty of his! (*)

There is alſo a remarkable Inſtance of filial Piety in the Hiſtory of China. In the Reign of the Emperor Vuen Ti, a Mandarin was condemned to Death; and was guilty enough to deſerve it. He had the good Fortune to have a Daughter affectionate and dutiful to him, beyond the ordinary Meaſures of filial Piety; who addreſſed the Emperor in his Behalf, preſenting a Memorial to him, wherein ſhe offered herſelf a Slave for Life, to ſave the Life of her Father. The Emperor, ſtruck with ſo extraordinary an Inſtance of Piety, pardoned the Father, and left his Daughter in her Freedom. And this was the more remarkable, inaſmuch as Daughters are little regarded, by the Chineſe, and often expoſed. (†) — But,

In all the Characters we read of excellent Women, there

(*) See the Note, Page 345, alſo to this Purpoſe.

(†) Churchill's Collect. Vol. I. Page 164.

Serm. CCCLXXXIV.

there is not a more illuſtrious Inſtance of filial Piety, than in the Story of Cimonus; who being caſt into Priſon, and there adjudged to be ſtarved to Death, his Daughter Xantippe fed him thro the Iron Grate with the Milk of her own Breaſts. It is further intimated that this ſame old Man, who had ſo much Comfort in his Daughter, had been a voluntary Priſoner himſelf in his younger Days for his Father – How remarkably, in this Caſe, were fulfilled the Words of the wiſe Jewiſh Writer, "He that honoureth his Father, ſhall have Joy of his own Children!" (*)

To theſe Inſtances on Profane Hiſtory, (known perhaps to but a few,) we ſhall add thoſe on Divine Record, either well known, or eaſily referred to, by all Men. — And,

1ſt. The Reverence which Shem and Japheth expreſſed for their Father's Honour failed not to draw a Bleſſing upon them; as did the contrary Behaviour of Ham a Curſe upon his Family. (‡) – The entire Confidence which Iſaac placed in his Father Abraham, and the ready Submiſſion he yielded to his Will on the moſt trying Occaſion, were Tempers truly admirable, and ſignally rewarded by Heaven. (†) Jacob acted as became One who had received the Bleſſing at the Hand of

(*) See the 1ſt. Part of No. 449, of the Spectator.

(‡) Gen. ix. 20—27. (†) Gen. xxii. 1—19.

of his venerable Parent, when he paid so dutiful a Regard to his Commands, in the Alliance he contracted with the Family of Laban. — And it was commendable in Esau, whatever might be his Character in other Respects, to forbear marrying the Daughters of Canaan, because he saw they pleased not Isaac his Father. (*)

The many Expressions of filial Duty and Affection which occur in the Story of Joseph, must strike every attentive Reader with Admiration and Pleasure: nor can we see him distinguished in so extraordinary a Manner as he was by the Smiles of Providence, without concluding that his Piety to his Father was highly pleasing to God. The Love which good old Jacob bare to him in his tender Years, was no Doubt heightened by the Son's assiduous Attention to conform to the Will of so indulgent a Parent. And as he learned Obedience by suffering, (for he was trained in the School of Affliction,) so he gave the most affecting Proofs of it, when elevated to the highest Station, next to Pharaoh, in Egypt. How earnestly did he enquire of his Brethren, (when they came to buy Corn of him) after the Welfare of his Father! — "Is your Father well, the Old Man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive?" (†) What a tender Message did he send to him by his Brethren, entreating him to come down to Egypt,

(*) Gen. xxviii. 1—9. (†) Gen. xliii. 27.

Egypt, and assuring him that "he should be near him, and he would nourish him, lest he should come to Poverty." What Respect did he shew him by meeting him, in his Chariot with his proper Attendants, at Gohen! and what ardent Affection, by falling on his Neck and weeping on it for a considerable Time! How did he pride himself in the Honour of presenting his aged Parent to Pharaoh! and how happy was he in making him so princely a Provision for the Remainder of his Days! In short, filial Affection, Reverence and Obedience stamped his whole Conduct to the End of Life. When he presented his Children to their Grandfather to receive his dying Blessing, "he bowed himself with his Face to the Earth." When he had performed the last tender Office of closing his Eyes in Death, "he fell upon his Face, and wept upon him, and kissed him." And the dear Remains of his venerable Parent he failed not to attend to the Land of Canaan, and to deposit them in the Sepulchre of his Ancestors, with every possible Expression of genuine Sorrow and affectionate Respect.

So extraordinary a Character as Moses is not to be passed over in Silence; and the rather, as a remarkable Circumstance occurs in his Story to justify the Inference that he was particularly attentive to the Duties we have been recommending. The Circumstance we re-

refer-to was the Respect he paid to Jethro his Father in-Law, when he made him a Visit in the Wilderness. "Moses went out to meet him, and did Obeisance, and kissed him." (*) Nor did he content himself with rendering him these external Expressions of Regard: he listened to the prudent Advice which Jethro gave him, "and did all that he had said." And thus were the Duties of filial Obedience, which he so solemnly enjoined on the Israelites, exemplified in his own Conduct.

The generous Attention, too, of Ruth to her Mother Naomi, amidst all that sad Reverse of Fortune which she suffered in a strange Land, is not to be enough admired. Naomi was her Husband's Mother, a Widow, Childless, and reduced to Poverty. In this destitute State she resolves to return to her own Country. And it might naturally be expected, considering what is the Manner of the World, that Ruth, having lost her Husband, Naomi's Son, should have no great Objection to the parting with his Mother. But such is her Attachment she will on no Account leave her. (†) And how God rewarded her Duty and Piety the Story at large relates: she married into a wealthy Family, became the Mother of a numerous Offspring, and had the great Honour of standing on the List of those from whom the Messiah descended. David,

(*) Exod. xviii. 7. (†) Ruth i, 16, 17.

David was as eminent for his Magnanimity and Generosity, as for his sincere and fervent Piety; and his Attention to the Safety and Repose of his venerable Parents, during the cruel Persecution he suffered from the House of Saul, affords a striking Proof of the one as well as the other. Driven as he was by that infatuated Prince into the Wilderness, he presented an Address on their Behalf to the King of Moab, entreating him to grant them an Asylum at Mizpeh. "Let my Father and my Mother, (says he) I pray thee, come forth and be with you, till I know what God will do for me. And he brought them, (it is added,) before the king of Moab: and they dwelt with him all the Time that David was in the Hold." (*)

The next Instance to be mentioned, and which we have already adverted to, is Solomon. From the great Respect he paid to his Mother, when he was grown to Man's Estate, and had ascended the Throne of Israel, it may be fairly concluded, that he held all that Duty we have been explaining and enforcing in the greatest Reverence. And his dutiful Carriage to his Parents was one striking Proof of that Wisdom, for which he is so much celebrated in sacred Writ. The Particular we refer to, was his Behaviour to his Mother when she demanded an Audience of him. It is said, "the King rose up to meet her, and bowed himself unto her,

(*) 1 Sam. xxii. 3, 4.

and

and ſat down on his Throne, and cauſed a Seat to be ſet for the King's Mother; and ſhe ſat on his Right-Hand." (*)

The Obedience of the Rechabites to the Commands of Jonadab their Father, and in Inſtances too of a very ſelf-denial Nature, is held up by the Prophet Jeremiah to the View of the Jews, in Order to expoſe the exceeding great Undutifulneſs of their Carriage towards God, who had acted the Part of a Father towards them. Jonadab had ſolemnly forbidden their drinking Wine all their Days, and building Houſes, and cultivating Vineyards and Fields, but that they ſhould lead a paſtoral Life, and dwell in Tents. This Command of their Father both they and their Children ſo religiouſly obeyed, for many Generations, that, in the Days of Jehoiakim, the Son of Joſiah, they gave a public Proof of their Piety to their Parent in the Temple, and in the Preſence of the Prophet. (‡) And although theſe Commands of their Father Jonadab had no ſtrict Claim to their Obedience, either from the Law of Nature, or the Law of God, but might well enough be diſpenſed with conſiſtently with both; yet God (to ſhew the Regard he hath for Piety to Parents) was graciouſly pleaſed to reward their Obedience in a very ex-

(*) 1 Kings ii. 19. (‡) Jer. xxxvth. Chap.

extraordinary Manner; "And Jeremiah ſaid unto the Houſe of the Rechabites, Thus ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, the God of Iſrael; Becauſe you have obeyed the Voice of Jonadab your Father, and kept all his Precepts, and done according to all that he hath commanded you; therefore, thus ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, the God of Iſrael — Jonadab, the Son of Rechab, ſhall not want a Man to ſtand before me forever."

We might mention other ſtriking Examples both in the Old and New Teſtaments, but that of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt will ſuffice. It is ſaid of him, when he was twelve Years old, that "he went down with his Parents from Jeruſalem to Nazareth, and was ſubject unto them. And he increaſed in Wiſdom and Stature, and in Favour with God and Man." (*) And the affectionate Attention he paid to them through the Whole of his Life, may be eaſily imagined from the tender Words which dropped from his Lips in the very Article of Death. Seeing his Mother and the Diſciple whom he loved, ſtanding by the Croſs on which he was expiring, he ſaid to her, "Woman, behold thy Son!" and then to the Diſciple, "Behold thy Mother!" meaning thereby to commend them to each other's cordial Regards. And the ſacred Hiſtorian immediately adds, "From that Hour that Diſciple took her unto his

(*) Luke ii. 51, 52.

his own Home." (*) How admirable an Example this! and what a deep Senſe muſt our Saviour have had upon his Mind of the Importance of filial Duty, thus ſolemnly to enjoin it, in Effect upon us all, with his expiring Breath! — To Conclude,

"Hear me your Father, O Children; and do thereafter, that ye may be ſafe; – for the Lord hath given the Father Honour over the Children, and hath confirmed the Authority of the Mother over the Sons.

"Whoſo honoureth his Father maketh an Atonement for his Sins – and he that honoureth his Mother, is as one that layeth up Treaſure.

"Honour thy Father and Mother both in Word and Deed, that a Bleſſing may come upon thee from them – For the Bleſſing of the Father eſtabliſheth the Houſes of Children; but the Curſe of the Mother rooteth out Foundations."

"Be grateful to thy Father, for he gave thee Life; and to thy Mother, for ſhe ſuſtained thee.

"Hear the Words of his Mouth, for they are ſpoken for thy Good – give Ear to his Admonition, for it proceedeth from Love.

"He hath watched for thy Welfare, he hath toiled for thy Eaſe; do honour, therefore, to his Age, and let not his gray Hairs be treated with Irreverence.

"For-

(*) John xix. 25—27.

"Forget not thy helpless Infancy, nor the Frowardness of thy Youth, and indulge the Infirmities of thy aged Parents; affist and support them in the Decline of Life.

"So shall their hoary Heads go down to the Grave in Peace, and thine own Children, in Reverence of thy Example, shall repay thy Piety with filial Love."

The End of the Nineteenth Volume.